Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri is excited your troop/group is participating in the Disability Awareness Patch Program, created to generate discussion, nurture an inclusive environment and empower girls to learn the value of each other. With your guidance, girls will gain greater insight and understanding of disabilities and differences, and use their G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ skills to promote inclusivity in Girl Scouting.

A series of carefully constructed activities will teach girls about inclusion through the Discover, Connect and Take Action model. Girls will learn why inclusion is important and how it applies to Girl Scout values. They will discover people-first language, connect through activities such as signing the Girl Scout Promise and take action by either volunteering at an organization that works with people with disabilities or hosting a disability awareness event.

As a leader, you may have already had rewarding experiences with girls with disabilities in your troop. Remember, you do not need to have prior knowledge or experience in the disability field to teach girls about acceptance and inclusion of others. All of the patch program activities include easy-to-follow activity plans, discussion starters and supply lists.

**Requirements**
To earn the patch, girls must complete five activities. Girls should choose one activity from each of the Discover, Connect and Take Action categories and should complete two more activities from any category. Girl Scouts can complete the activities individually or in a troop, in any order.

**Where to purchase patches**
The Disability Awareness patch may be purchased in the Girl Scout Shop. To purchase the patch, please complete the evaluation located in the back of this booklet and present the evaluation at the Girl Scout Shop or mail order to the GS Shop, 2300 Ball Drive, St Louis, MO 63146.

**How to wear your patch**
The patch should be placed on the back of the Girl Scout insignia sash or vest. Adults may continue to use an assortment of garments and accessories for patch placement.

**Helpful resources**
Another excellent resource for leaders of all ages is *Volunteers Essentials*. Troop leaders may decide to check out the Disability Awareness Kit which includes hands-on activities to help promote awareness and understanding of disabilities and differences, including Samuel Viewing Party Kit, or I am Norm Kit. All these resources and more are available through the Emerson Resource Center.

**Contacts**
In addition to the Emerson Resource Center, questions about the program can be directed to Kerri Kelley at 314.592.2366 or kkelley@girlscoutsem.org.
Discover: A Key to Leadership
Choose at least one activity from this category. Complete all steps in the numbered activity unless otherwise noted.

ACTIVITY 1: GETTING AROUND

Tips for discussion starters
• What is it like to have a disability?
• Some people with disabilities are born with a disability, which is known as congenital, while others have a disability because of an accident or disease.
• Some people who have a disability, especially people who cannot see, hear or walk, must learn different ways to do things.
• Learn what respectful language you should use when referring to people who have disabilities. Refer to person-first respectful language.
• Did you know that Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts, had partial hearing loss?

Do at least two of the five steps. (LEADERS NOTE: Simulation activities are to learn about specific disabilities and to problem solve to make daily tasks easier.)

1. **Deaf or hard of hearing** – A hearing disability can be defined in many ways, ranging from mild/moderate deafness in which a person has trouble hearing soft sounds, to complete deafness. A hearing disability can affect speech, language, communication and social skills. A person with a hearing disability relies on other senses, such as sight, to help them with basic communication skills.

   *Simulation activity* - Watch a closed-captioned television show with the sound turned off.

2. **Physical disability or limited mobility** - Physical disabilities are probably the most recognizable type of disability because they are something you can often see. A person may be born with a physical disability (these are called congenital) or their disability may have occurred because of an accident, infection or disease. There are many conditions that can be called a physical disability, including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spinal injuries or loss of a limb.

   *Simulation activity 1* - Bathe, get dressed, brush your teeth and hair, eat breakfast and get your things ready for school using your non-dominant hand.

   *Simulation activity 2* - Borrow a set of crutches. Use the crutches as you go grocery shopping or visit the mall.

3. **Learning disability** - A learning disability is a “developmental disability,” a term used to describe conditions that affect a person's physical, cognitive, behavioral or language abilities. Some people with developmental disabilities might have difficulty problem solving, communicating or developing social or life skills, such as how to greet others or make themselves a snack. Instead, they may do things and react to situations in ways that you may not understand.

   *Simulation activity* - For an entire Girl Scout meeting, speak using only two-syllable words.

4. **Blind or partially sighted** - A blind or partial-sighted person may have trouble seeing images, color, lights or shadows. Their vision may be distorted or blurred. Even though some people with visual impairments wear glasses, other people with visual disabilities may have severe vision problems that cannot be corrected with glasses.

   *Simulation activity* - While wearing a blindfold, set the table, eat dinner and clear the table.
5. **Specific learning disability** - More people have learning disabilities than any other type of disability. A person with a learning disability is not dumb or lazy; they may experience trouble learning or understanding certain things, such as reading, math or directions.

*Simulation activity* - Have each girl in the troop read one sentence aloud from the paragraph below.

“Cro-Magnon Man”

ehT qaimtimg also qroved that,
Sa well sa being a great humter,
Cor_Wagmom Nam saw a comsiberadle artist.
He dah flourisheb to a tine whom eno fo eth terridle
Ice Ages saw dlotting out nuch fo Europe.
He had estadlished db jinself, fought wilb aminals rof

When finished, discuss the following questions:

Did you feel frustrated while reading your sentence? Did it slow you down? If this was how you saw words, would you want to leave the group when it was your turn to read? How did you feel when other people helped you? Were you angry at yourself? Where you angry at other girls?

This is an example of a visual perception problem called reversals. Some people with learning disabilities reverse letters, numbers or whole words (saw-was). A person who writes reversals probably reads reversals, causing them to slow down while reading.

**ACTIVITY 2: DISABILITY ETIQUETTE**

With your troop or group, discuss the way you relate/react toward people with disabilities.

- Why do you feel the way you do?
- Why do people sometimes feel uncomfortable around people with disabilities?
- How can learning more about different disabilities help you to feel more comfortable?

Include the Disability Etiquette information included in this booklet as part of your discussion. Invite someone who works at a disability serving agency to moderate.

**ACTIVITY 3: INCLUSION**

Tips for discussion starters

- What does inclusion mean? The act of including or the state of being included.
- Girl Scouts believe that each girl is an equal and valued member. What does that mean for your group?

All girls are invited and encouraged to participate in Girl Scouts. Girl Scout programs, awards and insignia, and activities can be easily adapted for a girl with a disability. Choose a badge from GSUSA’s National Proficiency Badges such as the Legacy, Skill Building, Financial Literacy or Cookie Business badge or an age appropriate Journey. Adapt the project for a girl with each of the following disability: visual, hearing, physical, communication and learning disability.
ACTIVITY 2: THE GIRL SCOUT LAW

Tips for discussion starters
- What does inclusion mean? The act of including or the state of being included.
- Has there ever been a time where you felt excluded? How did that make you feel?
- Girl Scouts believe that each girl is an equal and valued member. What does that mean for your group?

Recite the Girl Scout Law together. Go over each section of the Law and discuss how it is applicable to inclusion. Talk about what it really means to be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Connect: A Key to Leadership
Choose at least one activity from this category. Complete all steps in the numbered activity unless otherwise noted.

ACTIVITY 1: AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Tips for discussion starters
- What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? It is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities.
- Why is it important to have an equal opportunity law? Can you think of other laws that protect basic civil rights?
- Can you understand how a person might feel if they were not provided the same opportunities to earn a living, travel by bus, using public accommodations, etc?

Learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a law to ensure equal rights for people with disabilities. Research the history of the ADA. Why was it enacted? Who does it cover? How has it helped people with disabilities?

ACTIVITY 2: AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)

Tips for discussion starters
- What is American Sign Language (ASL)? Discuss why some people might use ASL.
- Has anyone in the group seen an interpreter at an event? Many times, interpreters are hired for events such as plays, symphonies or political assemblies. Can anyone think of other places?
- What would make signing difficult, for the interpreter and for the person who is hearing impaired?

Research an organization that frequently uses an interpreter. Find out what their process is to share this information with the general public. Find another organization where using an interpreter would be beneficial and advocate on behalf of the hearing impaired. Under the ADA law, for example a public place may need to provide interpreters, closed-caption decoders or videotext displays for people with hearing impairments.

(LEADER’S NOTE: see the Sign Alphabet Chart in this booklet or visit a web resource such as lifeprint.com.)

ACTIVITY 3: IS YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY PLACE BARRIER-FREE?

Tips for discussion starters
- Who feels this building is accessible to people with disabilities?
- Why are certain areas not accessible?
- What could be done to make the area more accessible?
- Is the area accessible to people with different disabilities (physical disabilities, deaf or hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted, etc.)?
A barrier makes it very difficult or impossible for a person with a disability to navigate through a building. Visit a local school, office building, library or another public place. Use the “Accessibility Checklist” in this booklet to determine the accessibility of the building for a person with a disability. Make a list of what accommodations need to be made and offer suggestions on how to make the building more accessible.

**ACTIVITY 4: CAREERS**

Tips for discussion starters

- What type of employment opportunities are there for a career in Disability Services?
- Can a job in this field be rewarding? If you have the desire to improve people’s lives through individual care and support, you might consider a career in Disability Services.
- What types of jobs are available to people with disabilities?

Learn about the different occupations you can pursue in working with people who have mental, emotional and physical disabilities. Professions may include social worker, teacher, engineer, interpreter, advocate, lobbyist or physical therapist. Find out which courses you must take to work with people with disabilities. Ask if you can audit one of the necessary classes. Research employment opportunities, salary and work schedules for the career you choose.

Research the assistive technology or services used by some people with disabilities to help make their lives easier. Borrow and try out a piece of equipment such as a wheelchair, a closed-captioned television program or an augmentative communication device.

**Take Action: A Key to Leadership**

Choose at least one activity from this category. Complete all steps in the numbered activity unless otherwise noted.

**ACTIVITY 1: VOLUNTEER**

Tips for discussion starters

- Discuss the need for different organizations that assist people with disabilities.
- Where would a person with or without a disability find a descriptive list of local agencies and the services they provide? Would it be difficult for some people to find help? Why?

There are many organizations that work with people with disabilities. They provide everything from programming and camping experiences to job opportunities. Contact at least three organizations and ask what services they provide and who they help. Do they advocate for people with disabilities? Find out if they are publicly or privately owned. What do they charge? Find out if they are dependent on volunteers? Volunteer your services for at least one month at an agency that serves people with disabilities. Area agencies include the Ronald McDonald Children’s Home, United Way and the Special Olympics. (LEADER’S NOTE: Check the list of local service providers and organizations in this booklet.)

**ACTIVITY 2: DISABILITY AWARENESS**

Tips for discussion starters

- With your troop, talk about how you react toward people with disabilities. Why do you feel the way you do?
- Why do people sometimes feel uncomfortable around people with disabilities?
- How does learning about people with disabilities help make us feel more comfortable?
Learn more about people with disabilities. Plan a disability awareness activity or event for younger children at your local community center or elementary school. Include hands-on activities such as crafts and demonstrations on the uses of adaptive equipment. See if you can arrange for someone who works with people with disabilities to come and speak to the group about these topics.

(LEADER’S NOTE: Find more information about people with disabilities online. For program activity ideas check out the Disability Awareness Kit available from the Emerson Resource Center. Also, check the list of local service providers and organizations in this booklet.)

**ACTIVITY 3: PERSON-FIRST RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE**

Tips for discussion starters
- Ask yourself if the person’s disability is even relevant and needs to be mentioned when referring to individuals? When may it be relevant to mention?
- Is labeling a person by their disability a type of stereotyping? How does stereotyping affect people?

Practice using person-first respectful language when talking about people with disabilities. (LEADER’S NOTE: Check the Resource Guide located in this booklet for Disability Etiquette and person-first respectful language and the more to explore sentence activity,) Look through your local newspapers, faith-based newsletters, school newsletters/newspapers, or online media to see when person-first language is not used. When you notice person-first language has not been used, write a letter or e-mail describing when and how it was not used, how it could have been stated and why it is important to use person-first respectful language. Share your findings with your troop/group.

**ACTIVITY 4: ADVOCATE**

Tips for discussion starters
- People with disabilities can be found in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Do you know of anyone in your family, school or community that has a disability? How does that impact their life?
- Organizations such as Families and Communities Together (FACT) offer training and advocacy in support of children with disabilities. What other organizations use training to educate the public on important issues?

Research a disability and find out who it affects. Write a children’s book about a specific disability or about disability awareness. Donate it to your local library or Girls Scout Emerson Resource Center. Remember to abide by copyright laws. (LEADER’S NOTE: for more information about copyrights and licensing, visit the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at copyright.com.)
DISABILITY ETIQUETTE
Before your troop members begin working on their project, it will be beneficial for them to learn about Disability Etiquette. This information will help the troop know what is and what is not respectful language and behavior to use when interacting with people who have disabilities.

PERSON-FIRST RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE
Using person-first respectful language puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is. It eliminates generalizations, assumptions and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person-first Respectful Language</th>
<th>Language to avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A person who has Down syndrome</td>
<td>A Down’s kid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who has autism</td>
<td>An autistic person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a cognitive or developmental disability</td>
<td>Slow, retarded, simple, special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a physical disability</td>
<td>Crippled, deformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital disability or birth anomaly</td>
<td>Birth defect/affliction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible buses, bathrooms, etc.</td>
<td>Handicapped buses, bathrooms, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Talk about the person first, then the disability. Say “a person with a disability” rather than “a disabled person.” Remember, if a person’s disability is not important to the story or conversation, don’t mention it.
- It is okay to offer help to a person with a disability but wait until your offer is accepted BEFORE you help. Listen to instructions the person might give, or other assistive devices.
- Leaning on a person’s wheelchair is like leaning or hanging on a person and is usually considered annoying and rude. The chair is a part of the individual’s body space and should be respected as such.
- When offering help to a person who is blind or partially sighted, allow that person to take your arm. This will enable you to guide, rather than lead the person. Use specific directions, such as “go left two feet” or “take six steps to the right.”
- When talking to a person who has a disability, speak directly to the person, not through a friend.
- Relax! Don’t be embarrassed if you say things like, “See ya later” to someone who is partially sighted, or “Gotta run” to a person in a wheelchair.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, tap them on the shoulder or wave. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively to determine if they read lips. NOTE: Not all people who are deaf or hard of hearing can read lips. Those who do rely on facial expressions and body language for understanding. Stay in the light and keep food, hands and other objects away from your mouth. Do not shout. Use written notes to convey messages.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes with a person who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level with that person.
- When greeting a person with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. For example, you can say, “On my right is John Smith.” Speak in a normal tone of voice. Let them know when you move from one place to another.
Correct each of the following sentences using the guidelines above, including (and especially) people-first language.

1. Her daughter is autistic.

2. The ARC is an organization that helps the intellectually handicapped.

3. I took a class about learning disabled children.

4. Gallaudet is a college for the deaf.

5. A learning disabilities teacher has many opportunities to help the mentally challenged.

6. I donate money to organizations that help the handicapped.

7. After suffering a spinal cord injury, he became a paraplegic and was confined to a wheelchair.

8. He is a polio victim who currently suffers from post-polio syndrome.

9. We saw a video about a schizophrenic woman.

10. She is afflicted with multiple sclerosis and is bedridden.

11. He was crippled from birth.

12. There was a blind girl in my calculus class.
Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri
Disability Awareness Patch Program
American Sign Language (ASL) Chart
Explore your school, office building, local library or other public place. Use this checklist to determine how accessible the place is for people with disabilities.

YES  NO  Are there reserved parking places for people with disabilities?  
(They must be at least 96 inches wide.)

YES  NO  Does the main entrance have a barrier-free ramp?  
(It must go out at least one foot for every inch it goes up.)

YES  NO  Do all doors have a clear opening of 33 inches or more when open?  
(This allows a wheelchair to pass through.)

YES  NO  Are the doorknobs located in such a way that people in wheelchairs can reach them?

YES  NO  Are there handrails in hallways and near stairs?

YES  NO  Can drinking fountains be used by people in wheelchairs or by people with impaired use of their hands?

YES  NO  If the building has more than one floor, does it have an elevator? Are the buttons marked in Braille?

YES  NO  Are fire alarms/smoke detectors equipped with flashing lights for people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

YES  NO  Are windows 24 to 28 inches from the floor so people using wheelchairs can see out?

YES  NO  Is there at least one bathroom stall with handrails that could comfortably be used by a person in a wheelchair? (The stall door must swing outward.)

YES  NO  Is at least one sink, soap dispenser and towel dispenser no higher than 34 inches from the floor?
Adapt-Ability
Enables people with disabilities through technology.
9355 Dielman Industrial Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63132
314.432.1101
adapt-ability.org

Association on Aging with Developmental Disabilities
Develops, links and supports opportunities and services for older adults with developmental disabilities.
2385 Hampton Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63139
314.647.8100
agingwithdd.org

Center for Head Injury Services
Rebuilds and enhances the lives of people with brain injuries, autism, intellectual disabilities and visual impairments.
11828 Lackland Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63146
314.983.9230
headinjuryctr-stl.org

CHAMP Assistance Dogs
Places skilled service dogs with people who have disabilities to help them lead lives of greater independence; and with professionals who utilize their dogs' special skills in healthcare facilities, courthouses and children's advocacy centers.
4910 Parker Rd.
Florissant, MO 63033
314.653.9466
champdogs.org

Down Syndrome Association of Greater St. Louis
Benefits the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families through individual and family support, education, public awareness and advocacy.
8531 Page Ave., Suite 120
St. Louis, MO 63114
314.961.2504
dsagsl.org

Duo
Provides skilled assistance dogs to individuals with disabilities and trained therapy dogs to serve the community.
10955 Linpage Pl.
St. Louis, MO 63132
314.997.2325
duodogs.org
**Easterseals Midwest**
Strives to deliver exceptional services that helps build communities where all people with developmental disabilities, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), have equal opportunities to realize their goals, dreams and aspirations. Serves individuals and their families in Metropolitan St. Louis, Central, Northwest, Southwest and Southeast Missouri.
13545 Barrett Pkwy., Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63021
800.200.2119
easterseals.com

**Great Circle**
Creates something new in the communities they serve to help those struggling with difficult circumstances and to be a partner in their communities.
330 North Gore Ave.
Webster Groves, MO 63119
844.424.3577
greatcircle.org

**Midwestern Braille**
Assists the blind by transcribing a wide variety of materials into Braille.
104 W. Adams Ave.
Kirkwood, MO 63122
314.966.5828
mbvol.org

**Missouri Autism Coalition**
Promotes collaboration and information sharing regarding autism issues in Missouri.
P.O. Box 1431
Jefferson City, MO 65102
missouriautism@gmail.com
missouriautismcoalition.com

**Missouri Department of Mental Health**
State law provides three principal missions for the department: (1) the prevention of mental disorders, developmental disabilities, substance abuse and compulsive gambling; (2) the treatment, habilitation, and rehabilitation of Missourians who have those conditions; and (3) the improvement of public understanding and attitudes about mental disorders, developmental disabilities, substance abuse and compulsive gambling.
573.751.4122 or 1.800.364.9687
dmh.mo.gov

**Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council**
Assists individuals, families and the community in including all people with developmental disabilities in every aspect of life.
1.800.500.7878 or 573.751.8611 (voice or TT)
mpcdd.com
Paraquad, Inc.
Provides support for individuals with disabilities to discover their abilities.
5240 Oakland Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63110
314.289.4200
paraquad.org

Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis
Provides information on leisure, recreation and socialization opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.
recreationcouncil.org

St Louis County Office
200 S. Hanley, Suite 100
St. Louis, MO 63105
314.726.6044

St. Louis City Office
2334 Olive
St. Louis, MO 63103
314.772.2299

St. Charles Office
60 Gailwood Dr., Suite C
St. Peters, MO 63376
636.477.7704

St. Louis Arc
Provides support and services to adults and children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and their families.
1177 N. Warson Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63132
314.569.2211
slarc.org

St. Louis Learning Disabilities Association
Provides a comprehensive range of services to children with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, their parents and teachers.
13537 Barrett Parkway Dr., Suite 110
Ballwin, MO 63021
314.966.3088
ldastl.org

United Cerebral Palsy Heartland
Offers a wide variety of programs for people with cerebral palsy and other disabilities.
13975 Manchester Rd.
Manchester, MO 63011
636.227.6030
ucpheartland.org