Welcome

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. **Blind or partially sighted** - A person with a visual disability 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 1* - Using plastic wrap, tape six to eight layers of plastic to the lenses of an old pair of sunglasses. You may use swimming goggles or protective goggles. Put on the sunglasses or goggles and try to do everyday tasks such as reading a book, putting together a puzzle, playing a board game or making a sandwich.

   How did it feel to have your vision impaired? What would have made the task easier? Make a list of different ways everyday tasks could be made easier for a person with a visual disability.

   *Simulation activity 2* - Watch a television program while wearing a blindfold. Was it hard to “watch” the show without seeing it?

2. **Deaf or hard of hearing** - A hearing disability can be defined in many ways, ranging from mild to moderate deafness in which a person has trouble hearing soft sounds, to complete deafness. A hearing impairment 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 communicative skills.

   *Simulation activity* - With a partner, sit facing each other. Have one person at a time say something to the other, moving their lips only. Try to have a conversation and do not speak out loud. What problems did you have in understanding what was said? What happened if your partner turned her head?

3. **Physical disability or limited mobility** - Physical disabilities are probably the most recognizable type of disability because they are something you can see. A person may be born with a physical disability known as congenital, or the disability may occur 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 - Place two chairs of different sizes side by side. Move from one chair to the other and back without standing on your feet or using your legs. This is how a person who uses a wheelchair must transfer to a chair, bed, sofa, etc.

Simulation activity 2 - Sing a song such as “Head, shoulders, knees and toes.” Try singing the song three times. Some people have impairments affecting their muscles, which can make it difficult to do things such as raise their arms or reach their head, shoulders, knees and toes.

4. **Specific learning disabilities** - 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 qaimting also qroved that, 
Sa well sa being a great humter, 
Cor_Wagmom Nam saw a comsiberadle artist. 
He dah flourisheb to a tine whim eno fo eth terridle 
Ice Ages saw dlottig out nuch fo Europe. 
He had estadlishedb jinsel, fought wilb aminals rof 
sqace, 
Surviveb eht ditter colb, and left beeq bown unber 
groumb 
Nenorials of his yaw for life!

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.

5. **Developmental disability** – “Developmental disabilities” is a term used to describe conditions that affect a person’s physical, learning, behavioral and 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 - Using only two-syllable words, write a paragraph about your favorite Girl Scout memory or what you did during your last school vacation. Consider how hard it was for you to write the paragraph. How would you feel if you had to work this hard every time you tried to write? This is often how a person who has a cognitive disability feels when they must write their name or a simple sentence.
6. **Behavior disorders** - Have you ever felt so strongly about something that you couldn’t think about or focus on anything else? For some people with behavioral disorders, that is how they feel much of the time. A behavioral disability does not mean a person is bad or only does things to get attention. It is a disability they cannot control. A person with a behavioral disability is much like anyone else. She needs to be shown friendship and respect regardless of behavior.

   *Simulation activity* - Sit on the floor with your knees up, head down, arms around your knees and think about a time when you felt very alone. You can rock or hum, but do not talk. Try to focus only on your feelings. After five minutes, get up and write about how you felt.

7. **Speech and language disorders** – Imagine you have difficulty communicating clearly with others. How would you let people know what you thought, how you felt or what you needed? A communication disorder involves speech and language. Speech is the sound we use when sharing our thoughts or ideas. Language is the formation of thoughts or ideas into sentences or phrases. A person with a communication disorder has difficulty with their speech or language.

   *Simulation activity* - Read the following examples of different types of communication disorders out loud to other members of your troop. When you are finished, discuss how you felt and how your listeners felt during communication.

   Articulation Disorder - A thpeech dithoda ith not funny. It can be vewy embawathing to the thpeaka. Even a mld dithoda can cauthe a mithunuthanding.

   Stuttering - A-a-a speech d-d-d-isorder is not f-f-funny. It c-c-can be, uhm, you know, uhm very embaaarrassing to the –the speaker. Eeven a m-mild dis-dis-disorder canc ause a mis-mis-mis-misunderstanding.

**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 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?

Write to your members of Congress or state legislators to inquire about laws protecting people with disabilities. Learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a law to ensure equal rights for people with disabilities.

**ACTIVITY 2: IS YOUR SCHOOL OR MEETING 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. To look at how accessible your community is for people with disabilities. Use the “Accessibility Checklist” to determine if your school or meeting place is barrier-free.

**ACTIVITY 3: 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? Consider this, having the desire to improve people’s lives through individual care and support, a career in Disability Services may be for you.
- What types of jobs are available to people with disabilities?
- Explain the following: the ADA ensures equal opportunity to people with disabilities. It does not require an employer to favor 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, sign language interpreter or physical therapist. Find out what type of education is required and what kind of salary you might expect in various Disability Services careers. What is their day-to-day activity like? *LEADER’S NOTE: After your group discussion about different occupations, see if you can arrange for someone who works in the field to come and speak to your troop about their career.*)
ACTIVITY 4: TAKE THE STAGE

Tips for discussion starters
- Should everyone be treated equally, regardless of appearance or ability?
- What teasing or bullying do you notice at your school, home or place of worship? What can you do about it?

Break your group up into smaller groups (2-3 girls) to act out the scenario given to them for the troop:
1. Your best friend tells you that you have a big nose
2. You are playing soccer in gym class and you just missed the winning goal
3. Your mom is making you wear a dress with bows and ruffles to school
4. Two older students grab your homework and begin laughing at the mistakes they see

Discuss with the girls about how they felt while acting the scenarios out. What could be done differently to make everyone feel accepted?

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 adults and/or children with disabilities
- What type of services can they provide?

There are many organizations that work with adults and/or children 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. Invite someone from one of these organizations to speak at a troop meeting about their organization and their job. Prepare questions in advance and ask how your troop can assist the agency. *(LEADER’S NOTE: Refer to the list of local service providers and organizations included in this booklet.)*

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?

Using the Sign Alphabet Chart, go over the Girl Scout Promise in ASL with your troop. Instruct the group to practice the Promise on their own and with each other, and then sign as a group. 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: use the Sign Alphabet Chart in this booklet or visit a web resource such as lifeprint.com.)*
ACTIVITY 3: 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 famous people with disabilities. Your research might include Walt Disney, Thomas Edison, Helen Keller, Franklin Delanor Roosevelt, Wilma Rudolph, Susan B. Anthony, Marla Runyan and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Find out about Juliette Gordon Low and how she became hearing impaired. Share your findings with a younger Girl Scout troop at their troop meeting. You may want to develop a seek-n-find about famous people with disabilities, plan a skit about challenges people with disabilities face or try decorating a cookie with icing while wearing a blind fold. (LEADER’S NOTE: Search people with disabilities online. For program activity ideas check out the Disability Awareness Kit available from the Emerson Resource Center. Also, check the Resource Guide located in this booklet for a list of local service providers and organizations near you.)
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.
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?
Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri
Disability Awareness Patch Program
Service Providers and Organizations

**Adapt-Ability**
Enables people with disabilities through technology.
9355 Dilman 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