

# DISABILITY AWARENESS PATCH PROGRAM

## BROWNIE TRY-IT

### INTRODUCTION

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri is committed to helping girls and young women to be caring and compassionate individuals. With the Disability Awareness Program, girls from Brownie Girl Scouts to Senior Girl Scouts can gain greater insight, understanding and compassion for people with disabilities. Through a series of carefully constructed activities, girls will learn about the challenges faced daily by many people in our community.

As a Leader, you may have experienced the rewards of having girls with disabilities participate in your troop's activities. With society moving towards more inclusive social programs, it is important for both you and your girls to develop an awareness and understanding of different types of disabilities and to use this knowledge to promote the inclusion of all girls in Girl Scouting.

To help you in this process, Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri offers Disability Awareness programs for Brownie, Junior and Cadette/Senior Girl Scout age levels. These activities have been created to generate discussion and nurture an environment of inclusion.

#### Don't forget Daisy Girl Scouts!

Although Daisy Girl Scouts do not have a patch program, there is plenty for them to learn, too! In the Resource Center you'll find Disability Awareness Activity Kits—hands-on simulation activities that allow your girls to experience the feelings and challenges a person with a disability sometimes has when facing barriers in society.

#### MORE RESOURCES FOR TROOP LEADERS

Another excellent resource for Leaders of all age levels is *Focus on Ability*, the Girl Scouts of the USA guide on serving girls with special needs. *Focus on Ability* can be borrowed from the Girl Scout Resource Center.

By completing a Disability Awareness program, your girls can increase their awareness of the barriers faced by people with disabilities, thus helping girls to act with greater compassion and inclusiveness towards those who are different from themselves.

In order to purchase the appropriate age-level recognitions for *Our Own Council's Disability Awareness Program*, Girl Scouts and their Leaders must complete the program evaluation. Please return the attached form to the G.S. Shop in St. Louis or Hannibal at the time of purchase.

If you have questions about the program, contact Julie Schloss, 314.592.2301, [jschloss@girlscoutsem.org](mailto:jschloss@girlscoutsem.org).

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#### DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

Before your troop members begin working on their Try-It 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.

#### PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

People First Language puts the person before the disability and it describes what a person has—not what a person is.

#### PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

##### SAY:

Person with a disability

*She has a learning disability*

The child has a developmental delay

*Congenital disability or birth anomaly*

Person who uses a wheelchair

*Accessible parking*

##### INSTEAD OF:

The handicapped or disabled

*She's learning disabled*

The mentally retarded or slow

*Birth defect/affliction*

Wheelchair-bound or confined

*Handicapped parking*

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 may give.

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 one's body space and should be respected as such.

When offering help to a person with a visual impairment, allow that person to take your arm. This will enable you to guide, rather than lead the person. Use specific directions, such as "left two feet" or "right six steps," when directing a person with a visual impairment.

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" or "Gotta run," which seem to call attention to a person's disability.

To get the attention of a person who has a hearing impairment, 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 with hearing impairments 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.*

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When speaking with a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, 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.

#### THE DISABILITY AWARENESS TRY-IT

The Disability Awareness Try-It can help you understand, become aware, learn how to include, and accept people's differences and disabilities. Complete six of the eight activities below, Activity One is required.

#### WHAT'S IT LIKE TO HAVE A DISABILITY?

Some people with disabilities are born with a disability (congenital) while others have a disability as a result of an accident or disease. Did you know that Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts, had partial hearing loss?

#### ACTIVITY ONE: GETTING AROUND

Do at least three of the five activities. *\*LEADERS NOTE: Simulation activities are to learn about specific disabilities and to problem solve to make daily tasks easier.*

Some people who have a disability, especially people who cannot see, cannot hear or cannot walk, must learn different ways to do things.

#### VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

People may have different degrees of sight. Using a pair of old sunglasses, place strips of masking tape or duct tape on the lens. Put the glasses on and do the following activities: read a book, put together a puzzle or play a board game.

What would make it easier to do these activities? (For example: would large print be helpful?)

#### HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Watch TV, a video or DVD (without closed-captioning) for five minutes with the sound turned OFF. What parts couldn't you figure out? What would make it easier? (For example, how would you know the phone was ringing?)

Using the Sign Alphabet Chart on page 86 of the *Brownie Girl Scout Handbook*, learn to sign spell your name.

Make your name sign by taking the first letter of your name and placing it on your chin. Practice signing your name with a friend.

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#### LEARNING DISABILITIES

Write a “thank you” note to a person for a special present you have received.

Sit in front of a mirror and write the word “thank you” on a piece of paper while looking at the mirror. Do not look down at the paper. Try writing the note with your opposite hand. What did it feel like?

#### SPEECH IMPAIRMENT

Read the following sentence with a marshmallow in your mouth: “Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold.”

Did people understand you? How did it make you feel? What could you do to make it easier for people to understand you?

#### **ACTIVITY TWO: I’M OK, YOU’RE OK**

Look at the drawing to the right. How is each one of these people different? In what ways are these people all alike? (For example: would feelings or basic needs such as food, clothing or shelter be common bonds?)

What does “I’m OK, You’re OK” mean? (*I respect myself and you.*) discuss with your troop what this means. Sometimes people are disrespectful. Sometimes they call people names and tease them. What do you think the girls in the picture below get teased about? How do you think they feel when they are teased? How do you feel when someone makes fun of you? Why do you think people would call someone a name? Is everyone different? Is it OK to be different?

#### **ACTIVITY THREE: POSTER CONTEST**

**\*LEADER’S NOTE:** visit [www.ntholegree.com](http://www.ntholegree.com) for more poster examples.

Make a poster that will demonstrate how to treat people with disabilities with respect. Make your own drawing. Here are some ideas for the message to go with your drawing or you can think up your own message:

“Every Person Has Rights”

“We All Come In Different Packages”

“Sticks and Stones Can Break My Bones But Names Can Really Hurt Me”

#### **ACTIVITY FOUR: IS YOUR SCHOOL BARRIER-FREE?**

A barrier makes it very difficult or impossible for a person with a disability to navigate through a building. Use the “Accessibility Checklist” on page 5 to determine if your school or meeting place is barrier-free.

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#### ACTIVITY FIVE: WHAT IF?

We often face challenges in our lives. When an activity or situation is particularly demanding, it takes more time and energy, and can be frustrating. What is difficult for you to do? Can you understand how a person might feel if performing simple actions always were frustrating?

Sometimes an activity can be ADAPTED so it can be completed. Adapted means it can be changed or another similar activity can be substituted. With your troop, choose a game or other activity from the *Brownie Girl Scout Handbook* and adjust it in such a way that someone with a disability could do it, too.

#### ACTIVITY SIX: VOLUNTEER

*\*LEADER'S NOTE: Check the Resource Guide in the back for a list of organizations.*

There are many organizations that work with adults and/or children with disabilities. They provide everything from programming, camping experiences and job opportunities. Many of these organizations need volunteers. Learn about an organization and find out how your troop can help.

#### ACTIVITY SEVEN: SERVICE ANIMALS

*\*LEADER'S NOTE: See if you can arrange for someone who trains or uses a service animal to come and speak to your troop about these topics.*

Service animals are trained to assist a person with a disability with physical and emotional support. The animal has been trained to do work or perform tasks that benefit their owner. Find out what animals can be service animals. What they can do and how the public should interact with them.

#### ACTIVITY EIGHT: ETIQUETTE

What is the definition of respect? Respect means to be considerate in the way you think about and treat other people. Turn to page 2 and learn what is respectful language when referring to people who have disabilities. Make a list of how to respectfully treat a person with a disability.

#### ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

Take a look through your school, an area office building, local library or other public place. Using this checklist, determine how accessible the place is to a person with a disability.

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

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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 with hearing impairments?

- 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?

- YES    NO

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#### PROGRAM LINKS—BROWNIE TRY-ITS

- Brownie Girl Scouts Through the Years
- Citizens Near and Far
- People Are Talking
- Working It Out
- Girl Scout Ways
- Friends are Fun

#### RESOURCE GUIDE

Missouri Developmental Disability Resource Center  
<http://www.moddrc.org>

Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities  
<http://www.mpcdd.com>

Down Syndrome Association of Greater St. Louis  
8420 Delmar Boulevard, Suite 506  
St. Louis, Missouri 63124  
(314) 961-2504  
<http://www.dsagsl.org>

Edgewood Children's Center  
330 North Gore Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63119-1699  
314.968.2060  
<http://www.eccstl.org>

Epilepsy Foundation of the St. Louis Region  
7100 Oakland Ave  
Saint Louis, MO, 63117-1813  
<http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/stlouis>

Paraquad, Inc.  
5240 Oakland Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63110  
314-289-4200  
<http://www.paraquad.org>

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St. Louis Learning Disabilities Association  
13537 Barrett Parkway Drive  
Suite 110  
Ballwin, MO 63021  
314.966.3088  
<http://www.ldastl.org>

Missouri Department of Mental Health  
<http://www.dmh.missouri.gov>

St. Louis Arc  
1816 Lackland Hill Parkway  
Suite 200  
St. Louis, MO 63146  
314-569-2211  
<http://www.slarc.org>

Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis  
200 S. Hanley  
Suite 100  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
(314)726-6044  
<http://stlouis.missouri.org/reccouncil>

Life Skills Foundation  
10176 Corporate Square Drive  
Suite 100  
St. Louis, Missouri 63132-2924  
(314) 567-7705  
<http://www.lifeskills-stl.org>

Support Dogs, Inc.  
11645 Lilburn Park Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63146  
314) 997-2325  
[www.supportdogs.org](http://www.supportdogs.org)

# DISABILITY AWARENESS PATCH PROGRAM

## BROWNIE TRY-IT - EVALUATION

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#### EVALUATION

#### PART 1: For Troop Members and Adults

Indicate the number of girls in your troop by program age level and the number of adults who participated in the program:

Brownie Girl Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Junior Girl Scouts \_\_\_\_\_  
Cadette Girl Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Senior Girl Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Adults \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questions for girls (*record cumulative answers*):

2. Were these activities fun? Yes No

3. Did you learn about Disability Etiquette? Yes No

Describe some things you learned: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you learn about impairments? Yes No

Describe some things you learned: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Have these activities changed the way you feel about people who are different from you? Yes No

5. Do you have a better understanding of how people with disabilities deal with everyday barriers? Yes No

6. Do you think you will feel more comfortable around people with disabilities? Yes No

7. Do you have new ideas about how to include everyone in your activities? Yes No

#### PART II: For Adults Only—Rate the Disability Awareness Program

1. Instructions for Activities Very Good Good Needs Improvement

2. Materials for Activities Very Good Good Needs Improvement

3. Activities Very Good Good Needs Improvement

4. How did you learn about the Disability Awareness Program?

*Leader Program Bulletin* \_\_\_\_\_ *Neighborhood Announcements* \_\_\_\_\_

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri Web Site \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_