
Girl Scouts of Central Maryland

*Hand in Hand
Intergenerational
Experience*

Patch Project



For Junior, Cadette, and Senior Girl Scout Troops/Groups developed by Girl Scouts of Central Maryland
With assistance from the Keswick Multi-care Facility

Hand in Hand Intergenerational Experience

Why an intergenerational experience:

Volumes of research points to the psychological, social, and economic importance of strong ties between generations. Young people can benefit from exposure to positive adult role models and from the knowledge and experience that their elders have to offer. Similarly, involvement with younger people is one way for older adults to stay active and continue to feel useful.

This project is intended to give troops/groups the opportunity to have an intergenerational experience while learning and imparting skills. There will also be an opportunity for career exploration during your visits to the Senior Care Facility. **Girl Scouts of Central Maryland suggests that girls complete all the activities listed and complete their 4 week commitment to visit the care facility.**

Service Project Component:

Both the girls and the seniors should decide on a service project they can do together. This is an important component in making seniors feel active. It also gives both the seniors and the girls an opportunity to work together on a common goal. The troop/group may do a service project for the seniors if they wish but it must not replace the joint service opportunity. The following are a few suggestions:

- Care packages for women and children in homeless shelters.
- Knitting, sewing, crocheting clothes and bedding for sick babies.
- Making Easter baskets for children in homeless shelters.

Career Awareness and Exploration:

There are many occupations involved in the operation of a care facility. The troop/group will be given a tour of the facility to see some of the people in these occupations first hand. Girls will also be able to job shadow someone at the facility. The following is a list of occupations associated with senior care facilities:

Accountant	Laundry Aid
Activities Director	Medication Aid
Administrator	Music Therapist
Beautician	Nursing Assistant
Cook	Nurse
Custodian	Nutritionist
Dietician	Physical Therapist
Doctor	Psychologist
Gardener	Receptionist
Gerontologist	Secretary
Kitchen Aid	Social Worker

Skill Sharing:

It is important for both girls and seniors to have an opportunity to share skills with each other.

Skills that girls can share:

- How to use a computer
- How to "surf" the net
- Cooking
- Drama
- Reading

Skills that seniors can share:

- Quilting
- Sewing
- Knitting
- Crocheting
- History

What girls can do:

- spend one on one time with seniors
- Get seniors outside
- Assist with an exercise group
- Go for walks with seniors
- Listen

- Assist with musical therapy
- Assist in the beauty salon
- Play board games
- Write letters

What seniors can do:

Share their lives
Talk about the history of the community
Talk about the history of the country
Talk about societal changes

Care Facility Staff:

Nursing Staff: provides care in the health related areas, helps seniors dress and groom themselves, eat, walk, and assist them in their daily activities as needed.

Dietary Staff: provides meals and snacks according to the doctor's orders.

Housekeeping Staff: Keeps the resident's room and the care facility clean.

Laundry Staff: Washes all the resident's clothes and linen.

Badge Work:

Interaction with senior citizens can fulfill requirements for the Junior Girl Scout Badges and Cadette and Senior Girl Scout Interest Project Patches listed below.

Badges: Across Generations - (1,2,5,6,7)
Women's Stories - (3)

Interest Project Patches:

Generations Hand in Hand - (S.B. 2,T. 4, C.E. 3,4)

Women Through Time - (S.B. 2,3, T. 2,4, C.E. 3,4)

S.B: Skill Builders

T: Technology

C.E: Career Exploration

Intergenerational Experience Activities:

1. The Senior Care Facility:

It is suggested that you take at least two troop/group meetings to discuss the questions below. Proceed to the next question when you feel confident the girls have explored it to their satisfaction.

- **Q. What do you think a care facility looks like?** A. Most of the rooms are similar and the beds may have rails on them to stop people from falling out and injuring themselves. There may also be some medical equipment such as heart monitors or I.V. poles. Residents often personalize their room with bedspreads, pictures, and curtains.
- **Q. What do you think a care facility smells like?** A: It can smell of urine.
- **Q. Why does it smell of chemicals and urine?** A. Many adults as they age or become ill lose control over their bodily functions and may not know when they need to go to the bathroom or are unable to go by themselves. As there are a lot of seniors living in a care facility it leads to a strong odor of urine. Chemicals are used to keep the facility disinfected and to clean medical equipment.
- **Q. What colors do you think they use there?** A: Neutral colors are used because they are more restful, at the same time a contrast in colors assists the elderly in moving from place to place. Have girls name some neutral/peaceful colors.
- **Q. What sounds do you think you might hear at a care facility?** A. Many seniors cannot speak due to possibly having a stroke but still wish to communicate. Other seniors may scream or cry from frustration or lack of control over their situation. Bed rails may be rattled, seniors using walkers tend to make shuffling sounds with their feet, you will also hear the whirl of wheelchairs as residents travel. The television may be on with the volume very loud so seniors can hear it.

Experiences you may see at a care facility:

People with disabled hands and arms because of a stroke.

People who have lost the ability to speak and make noises to be heard.

People with growths or discolored skin or markings.
People who may slobber and drool.
People with amputated arms and legs.
The smell and odor of incontinence.

2. Seniors:

It is suggested that you take at least two troop/group meetings to discuss the questions below. Proceed to the next question when you feel confident the girls have explored it to their satisfaction.

- **Q. Why do we treat seniors differently than we do children?** A. We teach children but respect the elderly because they are older and know more about life and living.
- **Q. Are the elderly any different from children?** A. Yes they have experienced good times and bad.
- **Q. Why do middle aged people have difficulty in dealing with senior citizens?** A. They see themselves aging and becoming elderly. This is why young people are the best ones to spend time with seniors.
- **Q. What do you think the special talents of seniors are?** A. Writing, building things, poetry, cooking, sewing, quilting, dancing, farming, music, living through a special time in history. You will be able to discover each senior's special talents as you spend time with them.
- **Q. What does independence mean to you?** A. No longer needing someone to watch them when their parents/caregivers are gone for a period of time, handling their own money.
- **Q. What does independence mean to seniors?** A. The same things it does to you and taking care of their own needs, such as feeding, dressing, bathing, toileting, or walking by themselves.
- **Q. Name some tasks a senior citizen in a care facility can do for themselves?** A. Wheel their own wheelchair, feed themselves, do activities, read, attend Happy Hour, play cards, make ceramics, draw and visit with friends.
- **Q. What if the seniors can't do as well for themselves as we could do for them?** A. Let the seniors do as much for themselves as they are able to. Have the girls role play someone who needs lots of encouragement to do a task or play a game.
- **Q. What do seniors who live in care facilities lose?** A. Choice of food, recreation, choice of friendships, sleeping time, T.V. time, and transportation. However at Keswick residents do have a choice of food and have a T.V. in their room.
- **Q. If you were going to another country and could only take four things with you what would they be?** Have girls make a list of all their favorite possessions etc then ask them to pick only four things they really cherished. Discuss how difficult or easy this was and why.

3. Common Health problems and disabilities found in a care facility:

Discuss these issues with your troop/group. Girls can research each condition for a deeper understanding. You can also put the condition and explanation on separate cards and have girls match the description to the health problem.

Senility: refers to senior citizens decline of the mental capacities.

Short Term Memory: refers to things that happen now or recently, seniors may forget these things but remember things from many years ago.

Stroke: the flow of blood is interrupted by a blockage or blood clot.

Hearing Loss & Deafness: inability to hear things at a normal volume level, without aids such as a hearing aid.

Decreased Vision & Blindness: inability to see things clearly, without aids such as eyeglasses or unable to see anything at all.

Alzheimer's disease: refers to a failure of the brain functions, impacts motor skills and memory.

Parkinson's disease: refers to a shaking of hands, stiffening of muscles, shuffling gait when walking.

Diabetes: refers to the body not using up the amount of sugar in the food eaten.
Arthritis: refers to the wearing down of joints, fingers, hands, legs, knees, and hips may become disfigured and hard to move or operate.
Depression: refers to overwhelming feelings of sadness, can be caused by emotional problems, lack of control over their own lives.

Give girls a list of activities (see suggestions) and have them adapt the activity for the following:

Senior in a wheelchair
Visually impaired senior
Hearing impaired senior
Senior with very severe arthritis in her hands

Activities: Playing bingo
Bowling
Playing cards
Singing
Flower planting
Painting
Flower arranging

Tips for meeting with seniors:

1. Carefully observe the seniors' condition without directing attention to the disabilities.
2. Greet seniors with direct eye contact and a friendly hi! Speak slowly and directly, don't be afraid if they try to hold your hand.
3. Be sure they know you like and enjoy their company.
4. Learn the seniors' past and present interests.
5. Let them talk but respect their confidences.
6. Keep the seniors independence in mind at all times.
7. Stay relaxed.
8. Give lots of encouragement.
9. Be patient and give the senior plenty of time to respond.
10. Have a good time.

4. Aging is an inevitable and gradual process that is irreversible. People begin to age from the time they are conceived and born.

Discuss with girls the changes aging has on:

height
physical agility
hair
skin

5. Have girls make a collage of the aging process using magazines and newspapers to cut out pictures depicting the life cycle from baby to an elderly individual. Name this person, and create a story about their life using captions under each picture.

6. Explore the career opportunities available in a care facility and write a brief summary about one chosen career.

7. Gather and display articles from the past, use clothing, tools, food products etc. Discuss if these articles are still in use today and if they are used the same way as they were in the past. Compare the cost of these items 30 years or so ago. You could ask if the troop/group can put the display in the care facility and give the seniors an opportunity to reminisce about the past.

8. Have the girls try some of these activities to give them a better understanding of some disabilities seniors may have.

Physical Disability: Have each girl try to thread a needle while wearing either a pair of mittens or thick bulky socks. (girls may take turns if limited number of mittens are available)

Have girls try to button a shirt with their fingers taped together with masking tape. Wrap both hands including the thumbs with strips of masking tape. Did the girls find it frustrating, Why ?

Visual Disability: Have the girls blindfolded before snack. Give the girls directions to where the food is and have them eat and drink while blindfolded. You can also have the girls find their way to the bathroom, water fountain etc while still wearing the blindfold. (Make sure the girls have a guide who is not blindfolded) Ask the girls how it felt to do things they usually do without being able to see.

Hearing Disability: Before starting your troop meeting, have the girls place (do not stuff) clean cotton balls in their ears. Tie a scarf around their head to keep the cotton balls in place. Have the troop meeting with the girls as normal. At the end of the meeting ask girls if they notice any differences. Are people talking louder than usual? Do they have trouble following directions because they can't hear what you're saying? Are they any less intelligent because they can't hear. (frequently people who are hard of hearing are treated as though they are stupid)

Resources: Focus on Ability, serving girls with special needs. GSUSA
With grateful thanks to the Magic Me organization for the use of their materials in developing this program.

The Hand In Hand Intergenerational Patch Packet Form

Please complete and return to: Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, 4806 Seton Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215, Attention: Program

Date: _____

Troop/Groups: No. _____ Service Unit No. _____

Leader's/Advisor's Name: _____ Telephone No. _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Email Address: _____

Number of Girls Participating in this patch packet: _____

Individuals: Name: _____ Telephone No. _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Email Address: _____

Age level (check): Brownie Junior Cadette Senior STUDIO 2B

Patches:

Patches are available at the council store.

Please contact store for prices and information: 410-358-9711

We would like to hear from you!

What did you like the most about this patch packet?

What did you like the least about this patch packet?

What would you change about this patch packet?

Do you have any comments/suggestions?