MERIT BADGE SERIES

DISABILITIES AWARENESS

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
DISABILITIES AWARENESS

"Enhancing our youths’ competitive edge through merit badges"
Requirements

1. Do the following:
   a. Define and discuss with your counselor the following disabilities awareness terms: disability, accessibility, adaptation, accommodation, invisible disability, person-first language, and inclusion.
   b. Explain why proper disability etiquette is important, and how it may differ depending on the specific disability. Give three examples.

2. Visit an agency that works with people with physical, mental, emotional, or educational disabilities. Collect and read information about the agency’s activities. Learn about opportunities its members have for training, employment, and education. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.

3. Do TWO of the following:
   a. Talk with a Scout who has a disability and learn about the Scout’s experiences taking part in Scouting activities and earning different merit badges. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
   b. Talk with an individual who has a disability and learn about this person’s experiences and the activities in which this person likes to participate. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
   c. Learn how people with disabilities take part in a particular adaptive sport or recreational activity. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
   d. Learn about independent living aids such as service animals, canes, and augmentative communication devices such as captioned telephones and videophones. Discuss with your counselor how people use such aids.
e. Plan or participate in an activity that helps others understand what a person with a visible or invisible disability experiences. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.

4. Do EITHER option A or option B:

**Option A.** Visit TWO of the following locations and take notes about the accessibility to people with disabilities. In your notes, give examples of five things that could be done to improve upon the site and five things about the site that make it friendly to people with disabilities. Discuss your observations with your counselor.

- Your school
- Your place of worship
- A Scouting event or campsite
- A public exhibit or attraction (such as a theater, museum, or park)

**Option B.** Visit TWO of the following locations and take notes while observing features and methods that are used to accommodate people with invisible disabilities. While there, ask staff members to explain any accommodation features that may not be obvious. Note anything you think could be done to better accommodate people who have invisible disabilities. Discuss your observations with your counselor.

- Your school
- Your place of worship
- A Scouting event or campsite
- A public exhibit or attraction (such as a theater, museum, or park)

5. Explain what advocacy is. Do ONE of the following advocacy activities:

a. Present a counselor-approved disabilities awareness program to a Cub Scout pack or other group. During your presentation, explain and use person-first language.

b. Find out about disabilities awareness education programs in your school or school system, or contact a disability advocacy agency. Volunteer with a program or agency for eight hours.
c. Using resources such as disability advocacy agencies, government agencies, the internet (with your parent’s permission), and news magazines, learn about myths and misconceptions that influence the general public’s understanding of people with disabilities. List 10 myths and misconceptions about people with disabilities and learn the facts about each myth. Share your list with your counselor, then use it to make a presentation to a Cub Scout pack or other group.

6. Make a commitment to your merit badge counselor describing what you will do to show a positive attitude about people with disabilities and to encourage positive attitudes among others. Discuss how your awareness has changed as a result of what you have learned.

7. Name five professions that provide services to people with disabilities. Pick one that interests you and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss what you learn with your counselor, and tell why this profession interests you.
Disabilities Awareness Resources

**Scouting Literature**

*Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Athletics, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Digital Technology, Engineering, First Aid, Inventing, Medicine, Public Speaking, Robotics, Signs, Signals, and Codes, and Sports* merit badge pamphlets; *Guide to Safe Scouting*, No. 34416; and *Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088 (section 10.0.0.0)

With your parent’s permission, visit the Boy Scouts of America’s official retail website, www.scoutshop.org, for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.


Disabilities Awareness Resources

Scouts BSA handbook in large print. Pilots and Program Development, Boy Scouts of America. Send requests via email to advancement.team@scouting.org.

The following materials are available at www.scouting.org/resources/disabilities-awareness/:

- Scouting With Special Needs and Disabilities, an information sheet
- Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities, No. 510-071
- *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual*, No. 34059
- Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936
- *Abilities Digest* newsletter

For more information, email Disabilities.Awareness@scouting.org.

Resources for bullying prevention are available at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying/.
**Books**

**Fiction**

Many of these novels are classics available in several editions and formats including audio and large print.


Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind.* Atheneum Books, 2012. When a girl with cerebral palsy who cannot walk or talk is given a device that lets her “speak,” she surprises everyone around her.


Konigsburg, E.L. *The View from Saturday.* Aladdin Paperbacks, 1998. Four unique students attract the attention of their paraplegic teacher, who chooses them to represent their class in the Academic Bowl.


Martin, Ann M. *A Corner of the Universe.* Scholastic, 2004. After a school for people with developmental disabilities closes, a family must deal with a child-like young man whose existence they have denied for years.


Philbrick, Rodman. *Freak the Mighty.* Scholastic Paperbacks, 2001. Two boys unite to become a powerful team, using their unique, differently abled talents as their strengths.


Winkler, Henry. *Niagara Falls, or Does It?* Turtleback Books, 2003. In a series inspired by the author’s own experiences with undiagnosed dyslexia, a fourth-grader decides to “show” how he spent his summer instead of writing the usual essay.

**Nonfiction**


Floyd, Ingrid. *Opening the Gate: Stories and Activities About Athletes With Disabilities*. CreateSpace, 2013. An introduction to the world of wheelchairs and prosthetics, with outstanding athletes recounting the experiences that helped them participate effectively in sports and led them to the top of their athletic careers.


Oleksy, Walter G. *Christopher Reeve*. Greenhaven Press, 1999. Discusses the life-altering accident of the actor known for his role as Superman and for his efforts on behalf of people with spinal cord injuries.


Organizations and Websites

In addition to those listed here, many local and regional organizations support people with disabilities. Internet searches (with your parent’s permission) will help you find them.

**AbleData**
103 W. Broad St., Suite 400
Falls Church, VA 22046
Toll-free telephone: 800-227-0216
Website: https://abledata.acl.gov/

**Adaptive Sports USA**
P.O. Box 621023
Littleton, CO 80162
Telephone: 720-412-7979
Website: www.adaptivesportsusa.org

**American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**
9700 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 200
Rosemont, IL 60018
Toll-free telephone: 877-227-6799
Website: www.aapmr.org

**American Association of People With Disabilities**
2013 H St. NW, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20006
Toll-free telephone: 800-840-8844
Website: www.aapd.com

**American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 900
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: 202-387-1968
Website: http://aaidd.org

**American Council of the Blind**
1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 420
Alexandria, VA 22311
Toll-free telephone: 800-424-8666
Website: http://acb.org

**American Foundation for the Blind**
2 Penn Plaza, Suite 1102
New York, NY 10121
Telephone: 212-502-7600
Website: http://afb.org

**American Printing House for the Blind Inc.**
1839 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
Toll-free telephone: 800-223-1839
Website: www.aph.org

**American Speech-Language-Hearing Association**
2200 Research Blvd.
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Toll-free telephone: 800-638-8255
Website: www.asha.org

**The Arc**
1825 K St. NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006
Toll-free telephone: 800-433-5255
Website: https://thearc.org

**Attention Deficit Disorder Association**
Toll-free telephone: 800-939-1019
Website: www.add.org

**Autism Empowerment**
P.O. Box 871676
Vancouver, WA 98687
Telephone: 360-852-8369
Website: www.autismpowerment.org

**Autism Society**
6110 Executive Blvd., Suite 305
Rockville, MD 20852
Toll-free telephone: 646-385-8500
Website: www.autism-society.org
**Disabilities Awareness Resources**

**Autism Speaks**
1 E. 33rd St., Fourth Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
Telephone: 212-252-8584  
Website: www.autismspeaks.org

**BlazeSports America**
1670 Oakbrook Drive, Suite 331  
Norcross, GA 30093  
Telephone: 404-270-2000  
Website: http://blazesports.org

**Bookshare**  
Website: www.bookshare.org

**Brain Injury Association of America**
1608 Spring Hill Road, Suite 110  
Vienna, VA 22182  
Telephone: 703-761-0750  
Website: www.biausa.org

**Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**  
National Resource Center on ADHD  
4221 Forbes Blvd., Suite 270  
Lanham, MD 20706  
Telephone: 301-306-7070  
Website: www.chadd.org

**Disability Is Natural**
P.O. Box 39076  
San Antonio, TX 78218  
Telephone: 210-320-0678  
Website: www.disabilityisnatural.com

**Disabled American Veterans**
3725 Alexandria Pike  
Cold Spring, KY 41076  
Toll-free telephone: 877-426-2838  
Website: www.dav.org

**Disabled Sports USA**
451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 608  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Telephone: 301-217-0960  
Website: www.disabledsportsusa.org

**Easter Seals**
141 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1400A  
Chicago, IL 60604  
Toll-free telephone: 800-221-6827  
Website: www.easterseals.com

**Goodwill Industries International Inc.**
15810 Indianola Drive  
Rockville, MD 20855  
Toll-free telephone: 800-466-3945  
Website: www.goodwill.org

**Guide Dogs for the Blind**
P.O. Box 151200  
San Rafael, CA 94915-1200  
Toll-free telephone: 800-295-4050  
Website: www.guidedogs.com

**Helping Hands**
541 Cambridge St.  
Boston, MA 02134  
Telephone: 617-787-4419  
Website: https://monkeyhelpers.org/

**International Dyslexia Association**
40 York Road, Fourth Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21204  
Telephone: 410-296-0232  
Website: https://dyslexiaida.org

**Learning Disabilities Association of America**
461 Cochran Road, Suite 245  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
Telephone: 412-341-1515  
Website: https://ldaamerica.org
**Mental Health America**  
500 Montgomery St., Suite 820  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Toll-free telephone: 800-969-6642  
Website: www.mhanational.org

**Muscular Dystrophy Association USA**  
161 N. Clark St., Suite 3550  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Toll-free telephone: 800-572-1717  
Website: www.mda.org

**National Association of the Deaf**  
8630 Fenton St., Suite 820  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3819  
Telephone: 301-587-1788  
Website: www.nad.org

**National Center for Learning Disabilities**  
31 Thomas Circle NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005  
Toll-free telephone: 888-575-7373  
Website: www.ncld.org

**National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability**  
4000 Ridgeway Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
Toll-free telephone: 800-900-8086  
Website: www.nchpad.org

**National Down Syndrome Congress**  
30 Mansell Court, Suite 108  
Roswell, GA 30076  
Telephone: 800-232-6372  
Website: http://ndsccenter.org

**National Down Syndrome Society**  
8 E. 41st St., Eighth Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
Toll-free telephone: 800-221-4602  
Website: www.ndss.org

**National Federation of the Blind**  
200 E. Wells St. at Jernigan Place  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Telephone: 410-659-9314  
Website: http://nfb.org

**National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled**  
1291 Taylor St. NW  
Washington, DC 20542  
Toll-free telephone: 800-424-8567  
Website: www.loc.gov/nls

**National Multiple Sclerosis Society**  
Toll-free telephone: 800-344-4867  
Website: www.nationalmssociety.org

**National Organization on Disability**  
77 Water St., Suite 204  
New York, NY 10005  
Telephone: 646-505-1191  
Website: www.nod.org

**National Rehabilitation Information Center**  
8400 Corporate Drive, Suite 500  
Landover, MD 20785  
Toll-free telephone: 800-346-2742  
Website: www.naric.com

**Special Olympics International**  
1133 19th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20036-3604  
Toll-free telephone: 800-700-8585  
Website: http://specialolympics.org

**TASH**  
(Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities)  
1101 15th St. NW, Suite 206  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Telephone: 202-817-3264  
Website: https://tash.org
Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554
Toll-free telephone: 888-225-5322
Website: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs

United Cerebral Palsy
1825 K St. NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
Toll-free telephone: 800-872-5827
Website: http://ucp.org

United States Association of Blind Athletes
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
Telephone: 719-866-3224
Website: http://usaba.org

USA Deaf Sports Federation
P.O. Box 2011
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Website: www.usdeafsports.org

U.S. Paralympics
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5760
Telephone: 719-866-2030
Website: www.teamusa.org/US-Paralympics

Acknowledgments
The Boy Scouts of America thanks the following individuals, who were generous with their knowledge and time in assisting us with the Disabilities Awareness merit badge pamphlet.

• Sara Qureshi, director, Program Support, The Kids on the Block

• Chris Privett, communications director, The Arc of the United States

• Doug Hind, manager, Special Curriculum, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

• Dale McClellan, administrative assistant to the Young Men general presidency, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Boy Scouts of America is grateful to the men and women serving on the National Merit Badge Subcommittee for the improvements made in updating this pamphlet.

Photo and Illustration Credits
Burke-Triolo Productions—page 69

CapTel®/Ultratec Inc., courtesy; CapTel is a registered trademark of Ultratec Inc.—page 26 (captioned telephone)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library/Margaret Suckley, courtesy—page 14 (Roosevelt)

©Guide Dogs for the Blind Inc., courtesy—cover (guide dog); pages 22 and 23
Disabilities Awareness Resources

Hemera Technologies—pages 17 and 52

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, courtesy—page 14 (Tubman)

National Sports Center for the Disabled, courtesy—cover (skier)

Randall Anderson/Rossmiller Photography, courtesy—page 14 (Waddell)

San Diego Hall of Champions, courtesy—page 14 (Larson)

Shutterstock.com—cover (wheelchair, ©Jevgeni Mironov; prosthesis, ©Andrew Mayovskyy); pages 10 (©michaeljung), 15 (©Andrey_Popov), 21 (©Goodluz), 25 (cane, ©Ververidis Vasilis; wheelchair, ©Jevgeni Mironov), 26 (smartphone, ©Sasithon-sj), 27 (man, ©Monika Wisniewska; woman signing, ©adriaticfoto; woman on phone, ©Elena Eliseeova; manual alphabet, ©Littlekidmoment), 34 (wheelchair, ©Konstantin Yolshin), 36 (man with recorder, ©wavebreakmedia), 38 (©Phovoir), 41 (©Chad McDermott), 42 (ribbon, ©GWImages), 45 (©Phovoir), 54 (©Deflector Image), 56 (©Monkey Business Images), 57 (©Monkey Business Images), 58 (©Photographee.eu), and 59 (©Monkey Business Images)

Special Olympics, courtesy—page 42 (athlete)

Wikipedia.org, courtesy—cover (hearing aid); page 29 (skier)

Wikipedia.org/Sarah Chester, courtesy—cover (folding cane)

Wikipedia.org/James38—page 26 (videophone)

Wikipedia.org/®Matt Martin, courtesy—page 14 (Tebow)

All other photos and illustrations not mentioned above are the property of or are protected by the Boy Scouts of America.

Dan Bryant—pages 8, 34 (street), 35, and 43

Tom Copeland Jr.—pages 13 and 32

Greg Crenshaw—page 5

Ernest Doclar—page 29 (basketball game)

Al Drago—page 7

Daniel Giles—pages 4, 40, and 60

Jeff Hattrick—page 20

Mary Oakes—page 48

Randy Piland—pages 6, 30, 33, and 37

Steve Seeger—page 28

Trey Spovey—page 51