DISABILITIES AWARENESS
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“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)

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/.

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.

**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.


Kling, Andrew A. *Cerebral Palsy.* Lucent Books, 2012. Discusses the incurable disorder that strikes about two in 1,000 infants yearly in the United States.


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.autismempowerment.org

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

Disability Awareness Resources

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 211
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.

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