

# Hospital Helpers Service Project

2022-2023





# Welcome to Hospital Helpers!

As Girl Scouts, we are leaders and changemakers. We stay eager to be part of something bigger than ourselves and believe that we can make the world a better place. That's why Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council is proud to announce our newest community service project: Hospital Helpers.

This exciting community service project will unite Girl Scouts with the West Virginia University School of Public Health to bring joy to children in hospitals. Involvement in the Hospital Helpers Program means helping children feel cared for and loved by their community.

To participate, Girl Scouts will *Take Action* by collecting items, fostering a sense of caring and learning about health care systems in their community.

Follow along as we invite your Girl Scout to make a difference through this program.

# Getting Started

By participating in the Hospital Helpers Program, Girl Scouts will complete the following:

- Develop an understanding of other children in their community.
- Foster a sense of caring, empathy and generosity towards others.
- Apply critical thinking skills when collecting items to donate.
- Learn about health care systems in their community and explore future career opportunities.

In order to participate in the Hospital Helpers program, Girl Scouts will collect items deemed acceptable by our partnering health care systems. The items will then be donated alongside notes of well wishes to children who are spending time in the hospital.

Our goal is to not only brighten the day of a child who is sick or hurt, but also teach participating Girl Scouts about empathy, compassion and the power of giving back. We hope that by participating in this program, Girl Scouts and volunteers will cultivate a spirit of generosity and thankfulness which will inspire them to continue volunteering in the future.

Additionally, by participating in this program, in addition to Girl Scouts' existing STEM curriculum, Girl Scouts will be exposed to potential career opportunities with health care systems in their community.



# Earning the Patch

Our new 2022 - 2023 Hospital Helpers Service Patch was designed to help commemorate this unique and exciting experience!

Girl Scouts can receive this patch by working together to identify local hospitals that are willing to accept donations for children in their care. They may then use suggestions provided in this packet or recommendations from their participating hospital to collect items to donate.



Upon making contact with their local hospital, Girl Scouts can meet with their troop and brainstorm helpful ways to contribute to children in care. This may be through the donation of toys, personal care items, blankets, books or game. It could be through crafted cards or thoughtful notes of encouragement. Maybe it is through creative virtual meetings! The possibilities are endless!

Girl Scouts who complete this project will then earn the 2022-2023 Hospital Helpers patch. Fun patches such as these should be worn on the back of a Girl Scout's vest, smock or sash.

To purchase this patch, please contact the Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Boutique at 304-345-7722, [shop@bdgsc.org](mailto:shop@bdgsc.org) or by visiting our website at [www.bdgsc.org](http://www.bdgsc.org).

## Thank you...

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond would like to extend a special thank you to the students from the West Virginia University School of Public Health for their hard work, insight and collaboration on this project.

# Suggested Donations

Interested in participating in our Hospital Helpers project but unsure where to start? We've got you covered! Use the following list of items as suggested donations.

- Rattles
- Bouncy Seats
- Playing Cards
- Board Games
- Puzzle Books
- Coloring Books
- Crayons
- Markers
- Hot Wheels Cars
- Crafting Kits
- Lego or Duplo Kits
- Play-Doh
- Little People
- Barbies
- Kinetic Sand
- Board Books
- Blocks
- Restaurant or DoorDash Gift Cards
- Travel Size Toiletries
- Multi-Cultural Hair Products
- Hair Accessories (headbands, hair clips, hair ties, etc.)
- Blankets
- Pillows and Pillow Cases
- Socks
- Individually packaged snacks

## Need more help?

Unsure of what to donate? Can't find a partnering hospital? Need directions with next steps? Reach out to us for assistance!

Contact Cate Phillips, Director of Programs and Education Services at [cate.phillips@bdgsc.org](mailto:cate.phillips@bdgsc.org) or 304-345-7722 for help.



# Donation Reminders

Remind your troop of the following to ensure your participation is a success!

- Follow the suggestions and guidelines provided by your partnering hospital. Different hospitals may have different rules for donations.
- Follow all COVID-19 guidelines outlined by your partnering hospital.
- All donated items should be new and remain in their original packaging.
- Be mindful of common allergies when selecting items.
- Always verify your plans with a hospital representative ahead of time.
- If you're unsure about an item, please ask your partnering hospital. We want all donations to serve a need and bring a smile to children in care.



## Safety Procedures

Because our Hospital Helpers Service Project is aimed at helping those in the hospital, we at Girl Scouts of Black Diamond want to ensure our members, as well as the patients we serve, follow the most accurate safety procedures.

Use the following as guidelines for your activities. Remember, every hospital has different safety procedures. Please consult your participating hospital to learn more about their safety guidelines.

Program Do's	Program Don'ts
Have donations in their original boxes.	Donate perishable items.
Be aware of allergies.	Wrap donations.
Follow COVID-19 guidelines.	Donate stuffed toys (unless directly shipped from manufacturer).

# Cancer Patient Etiquette

It can be tough to know how to correctly support someone who is fighting against cancer, and it is especially difficult to know what to say. While interacting with those battling cancer can sometimes bring on feelings of fear and shock, it's important to remind participating Girl Scouts to not say inappropriate things. Being present and listening is the best way to support those who are patients in a hospital or going through chemo treatment.

Review the following list with your troop and discuss what should and shouldn't be avoided in conversations with patients. Brainstorm potential conversation topics with your Girl Scouts to better prepare them for the interaction. Note: If you're working with children with very specific illnesses or injuries, consult your participating hospital to learn how to best approach the children/patients.

## ***"I've heard that 'X' cures cancer."***

Patients experiencing cancer or another illness have an entire medical team helping them through their diagnosis. Leave it to their healthcare professionals instead of suggesting possible treatment.

## ***"You don't look sick." Or, "You don't look like a cancer patient."***

Not everyone has to appear ill to be sick. You can look okay on the exterior but still be battling an illness.

## ***"You are strong and brave."***

Illnesses such as cancer is a marathon treatment and not a sprint. Instead of putting weight on a patient to be strong, be a strong support for them."

## ***"Congratulations! Now that you've finished treatment, you can go back to a normal life."***

Life will never be "normal" after experiencing treatment for an illness such as cancer. But that doesn't mean it can't be enjoyable and beautiful. Don't suggest that life will be like it once was.

# Continued...

## ***"I had a friend or family member die of cancer."***

A statement like this can be disheartening for someone with a cancer diagnosis. Nobody with cancer wants to be reminded of the possibility of mortality.

## ***"Everything is going to be fine."***

In reality, nobody knows if everything will turn out fine with a harsh diagnosis. It's best to avoid any remarks like this.

## ***"That's a good cancer to have."***

There is no such thing as "good cancer." Yes, some cancers can have easier treatments, but it's still cancer, which is a scary diagnosis.

## **Nothing**

Saying nothing can make people feel abandoned. If you are nervous, ask a patient what their favorite movie or show is, or what books they enjoy reading. Start basic! Since this program is run by kids, all conversations should be kept light and revolve around children's topics.





# Maximizing the Experience

Participating in the Hospital Helpers Service Project doesn't have to be exclusive to your Girl Scout Troop. Use your connections to involve other parties who can make a difference in the lives of patients, especially those who are young.

Some examples of positive outside groups are Heroes 4 Higher or A Moment of Magic Foundation, a nonprofit organization that allows college-age students to volunteer with children in hospitals. To find an approved outside group in your area, or to learn more about possible event and programming ideas, please contact Cate Phillips, Director of Programs and Education Services, at [cate.phillips@bdgsc.org](mailto:cate.phillips@bdgsc.org) or 304-345-7722.

As always, communicate with your participating hospital to see if they already have connections in place. If they do not, be sure to verify if including visitors adheres to the safety guidelines of the hospital.

All Hospital Helpers programming ideas should be approved by your participating hospital prior to scheduled events or donation drop-offs.





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