

# Adopt a Grandparent



### Objectives:

The purpose of this patch program is to bridge the gap between different generations. It is designed to pair a Girl Scout with a senior friend for sharing talents, knowledge, explore the differences in generational attitudes and increase knowledge of the aging process. This patch can be completed as a troop or as an individual. Some girls may be shy or uncomfortable and may prefer to complete the program in a group setting or in pairs. Girls can find senior friends at retirement facilities, senior associations, an elderly neighbor, a shut-in from church or within their own families. This is a wonderful opportunity to begin a friendship that can last a lifetime.

Through participation in this inter-generational patch program, girls will gain:

- Increased understanding of social consciousness for people of all ages.
- An understanding and appreciation for the differences in generational attitudes.
- An understanding of the past as related by people who experienced those times.
- Increased confidence to discuss and address challenging issues dealing with the aging population.

### Grade Level Requirements:

To earn this patch, everyone must complete requirements 1, 2 and 3. These requirements can be done as a troop or individually. Each grade level must also complete the minimum number of activities listed below:

Grade Level	Required Item #s	Additional # of Requirements	# of Service Projects
Brownie	1, 2, 3	1	1
Junior	1, 2, 3	3	2
Cadette	1, 2, 3	4	3
Senior/Ambassador	1, 2, 3	6	4

Note: This is a GSNCA council patch and should be worn on the back of the uniform.

### Requirements:

1. Meet your new senior friend and visit them at least once a month for three months or more.
2. Older people have more physical problems than most of us. Explore some of these challenges by “walking in their shoes.” For example: Stuff your ears with cotton to diminish hearing; cover the lenses of glasses with petroleum jelly to test failing eyesight; put on thick gloves and try to button your shirt to simulate arthritis in your fingers and hands; place uncooked pinto beans in your shoes or bind your knees and ankles with ace bandages to simulate walking difficulties; stuff marshmallows in your mouth and try to recite a poem to simulate slurred speech.
3. Learn the differences in nursing centers, rehabilitation facilities, retirement homes, assisted living facilities and intermediate care.
4. Spend some time discussing your family backgrounds, heritage, religious preferences, histories, customs, awards, accomplishments and interesting facts about yourselves and your families. Be sure to listen to your senior friend as well as talk about your own life.
5. Learn about careers from your senior friend. Ask about her first job, career training and challenges in the working world. Tell her about the future careers you’re interested in and why.
6. Ask your senior friend about fashions when she was young. Ask her to describe the hairstyles, clothing trends, footwear, hat styles and other fads that were popular when she was a teenager. Describe the fashions that are in style now.
7. Talk to your senior friend about how technology has changed since she was a girl and share with her the ways you hope it will change in the future. Tell her about some of the ways you use technology every day.
8. Share with your senior friend about Girl Scouting. Tell her about the activities you take part in with your troop and as an individual—and be sure to include the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Ask her if she was a Girl Scout. If she was, find out about how Girl Scouting was different then. If she wasn’t a Girl Scout, ask her what kinds of things she did for fun.
9. Choose a holiday that is special to your senior friend and share it with her. Talk about what part of the holiday she enjoys the most and observe some of its customs together. Maybe you can help her decorate or prepare for the holiday.
10. Spend some time listening to music that your senior friend enjoys now or that she listened to as a girl. Some classic music has been transferred to CDs and many old records can be found at libraries or online. Share a recording of the music you like to listen to. Be aware that an older person may not wish to listen to the whole album and be sensitive to this.
11. Make a card for your senior friend for her birthday, a holiday or just to say she’s special, and send it to her in the mail.
12. Make a healthy treat for your senior friend and share it with her. If possible, make something together from one of her favorite recipes or from a recipe that you create together.
13. Make up an activity of your own that will enhance your new relationship with your senior friend.
14. Ask your senior friend about her childhood. What are some of her favorite games? If you don’t know how to play, have the person teach you.

### Service Projects:

1. Complete a service project in your senior friend’s neighborhood. Help with yard work, pick up trash or another task that may otherwise be a challenge to them.
2. Teach a younger troop about the challenges faced by the elderly population. Help them explore ways to be considerate and helpful towards older people in their communities.
3. Research resources and services available to the elderly in your community. Create a resource book for your senior friend or a retirement community.
4. Come up with and complete your own service project to assist your senior friend or other elderly individuals in your community.
5. Visit a neighborhood program that feeds the elderly (senior citizens center, nursing home, assisted living facility or retirement home); help prepare or serve a meal.
6. Adopt an assisted living facility, nursing home or senior citizen center.