INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

GIRL HEROES

October 11
International Day of the Girl (IDG)

IDG is an opportunity to bring global focus to girls’ rights, the challenges that girls face in their everyday lives and to empower girls to make a positive difference in the world.

Celebrate International Day of the Girl by having a special meeting and help girls earn this crest!
The United Nations declared International Day of the Girl as a time to recognize girls and young women as citizens and powerful agents of change in their lives, the lives of their families and of their communities. Girl Guides of Canada (GGC) is marking International Day of the Girl 2014 by celebrating female heroes, and how simple actions can generate strength, hope and inspiration. It’s a day to hear from girls about what it means to be a hero, and the female heroes that have made an impact on their lives.

The activities in this International Day of the Girl instant meeting offer girls the opportunity to explore, speak out and be inspired by issues they care about in their communities and around the world. Ideally this meeting will take place the week leading up to October 11; however, units can choose to participate as close to the date as possible throughout the month of October.

Here are some suggested activities to use in your unit meeting to celebrate International Day of the Girl.

Select two to three activities to complete and earn the International Day of the Girl crest, currently available on thegirlguidestore.ca.

Materials:
- Paper/construction paper/large craft paper for each girl in the unit
- Sticky notes
- Markers/crayons/pencils
- Magazines (optional)
- Print out “How are YOU a hero” one copy per girl
- Photo of female family member (some prep work required for this activity collecting photos)

Introduction

What is International Day of the Girl? Using the Guider Resources (see page 6), explore what IDG is all about, why we celebrate it, and what it means. Give your girls some basic background information on this important day so they understand why GGC commemorates it every year. Then, let your unit know that the theme for the meeting is female heroes. To do this you can share the inspiring Roya Shams Story (see page 7) and discuss how she might be considered a hero.

As a group explore what it means to be a hero. Have girls write the qualities that they think are heroic such as bravery, strength, kindness or friendship, on chart paper or using sticky notes and attach them to the wall so words are displayed around the room. Alternately, girls could draw images that represent heroism and display them on the wall or on large paper. They could also take turns acting out different scenarios involving acts that they think are heroic (such as holding the door open for someone, lending a hand or participating in a park clean-up), while the rest of the unit guesses what the act of heroism is. Then have them share why they identified those particular actions/words/scenarios as heroic. Be creative and allow the girls to drive the conversation.

For Pathfinders and Rangers you may choose to have a conversation in which you identify characteristics, actions or beliefs that they consider heroic. Ask them what makes someone a hero. Again, you can use chart paper to display words and images to generate an engaging brainstorm!
Activity 1: Hero Tree

Have each girl draw a large tree on a piece of paper/chart paper (larger sized craft paper works great). Make sure the tree has wide, long branches that are spread apart so girls can easily write on them. Girls can also use magazines or newspapers to decorate parts of the tree. For Sparks and Brownies, they can create one or two trees as a group and work on them together. Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers can create their own tree if they prefer or girls can create one even larger tree and work collectively as a unit.

Ask each girl to think more about female heroes. They can think about women in their community, or women in politics, sports, science, teachers, etc. or even their friends or women in their families. Have them write the names of their different heroes throughout the branches of the tree, creating “leaves.” They can also use images from magazines, or use letters cut from magazines. Use markers, crayons or pencils to make the tree bright and colourful.

Sparks, Brownies and Guides can consider female heroes from the perspective of female superheroes or fairy-tale and movie characters.

Once everyone has a chance to make their own tree or contribute to the group tree, come together and share what has been created:

- Ask a few girls to name one of their heroes and explain why they are heroic.
- What are some of the qualities the girls used to identify their specific heroes?
- Are these qualities achievable?
- Are there similarities? Differences?
- Are heroes important? Why or why not?

Display all the trees around the room and refer to them throughout the meeting.
Activity 2: Literary Heroes and Authors

Brainstorm as a group female literary heroes and/or authors. Refer to Guider Resources (see page 7) for suggested names. Bring books or photos for visual references for the girls – or Google references together on a tablet or laptop.

- What fictional characters inspire you? Why?
- Do you have a favourite female author? Character?
- Is it important to have strong female characters in stories? Why?

Use one of the listed authors or fictional characters in the Guider Resources as examples of literary heroes.

Activity 3: Create Your Own Super Hero!

What superpowers would you want if you were a superhero? Try designing your own superhero! For Sparks, Brownies and Guides have them think about what their strengths are and how those could be used as superpowers. Also, decide what causes they would fight for and defend. The environment? Girls’ rights? Victims of bullying? It could be anything! They should put all their ideas down on paper and then give her a name. Then they can draw/create a badge of honour that represents her. Once their heroes are developed and their badges drawn, girls can share her with the rest of the unit!

For older girls, ask them to consider what cause they would support if they were a superhero (the environment, crime, poverty, etc.). Have them write a diary entry from a day in the life of their imagined superhero. What would the hero do in a typical day? How would she make a positive impact on the issues she cares about, and what qualities and skills would she need to possess? What obstacles might she face, and how would she overcome them? Be creative! Girls can then read their diary entries out loud to the unit.
Activity 4: Girls in History

In advance of the meeting, ask your unit to ask their mothers/aunts/grandmothers about what it was like to be a girl when they were young. What has changed about jobs for girls and women, school, how they dress, how they are seen on TV and in movies/music. Bring in a photo and tell their story.

For Sparks, Brownies and Guides, have them role play their mother/aunt/grandmother and act out a scenario from what their childhood was like.

You could also invite a guest speaker to your meeting. This person could be a grandmother, mom, aunt, or another female family member who perhaps grew up in a different generation, or country. She could share what it was like growing up and how things have changed for girls in women throughout her lifetime.

Activity 5: How are YOU a hero?

Share the story of Brownie Danika as an example of an everyday hero. See her story in Guider Resources (see page 8).

Using the GGC printout have your girls tell us how they are heroes! They can write words, draw pictures or use cut outs from magazines to tell us what they’re doing in their families, schools, communities, or Guiding unit, to make a difference!

Once you’ve had your girls fill out how they are heroes, send them to National Office. Tell us your stories; we want to hear from you!
Guider Resources

Units can commemorate International Day of the Girl in the days leading up to October 11, or another time in the month of October if that week doesn’t work. This meeting is a great opportunity to invite other branches to join in. For example, girls in Pathfinders/Rangers could help facilitate activities and discussions with the younger girls and help them to brainstorm ideas about how they are each heroes.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL?

International Day of the Girl (IDG) is a day to commemorate and support girls’ rights and to collectively work towards ending global gender inequality. According to the UN, this day “focuses attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls’ empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights.” This initiative was created to bring global attention to the challenges that girls face in their everyday lives, and to encourage governments and communities to address these challenges.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR GIRLS AROUND THE WORLD?

Girls around the world experience persistent discrimination and inequality simply because of their gender and their age. According to UNICEF, girls and young women significantly fall behind boys in 11 major areas due to this discrimination. These areas include education, poverty, early child-marriage, health, violence, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, child labor, identification documents and participation in decision making. For instance, according to a UNICEF report, by age 18 girls on average receive 4.4 fewer years of education than boys. Additionally, girls and women compromise 70 per cent of the world’s poor, which is largely attributed to their limited access to education.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

About half of the world’s population is under the age of 25, and about half of them are girls. Without equal access to education and jobs, or participation in decision-making bodies and the implementation of programmes and policies, we are overlooking a very powerful resource. According to a survey conducted by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) in 2012, the top five issues facing girls today include sexualisation and objectification, violence, underemployment and unemployment, discrimination, and a lack of opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. These challenges can be seen around the world, and here at home in Canada.

By commemorating International Day of the Girl, we can achieve the world we want for girls. We can ensure their health and safety, their access to education; we can challenge stereotypes and attitudes towards girls, involve them in decision-making processes, and give girls a voice. Girls and young women are important agents of change in their families and communities, and IDG is just the beginning in creating the world we want for girls.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON IDG, CONSIDER REVIEWING THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

Plan Canada: www.becauseiamagirl.ca
10x10: www.101x10act.org
Half the Sky: www.halftheskymovement.org
Roya Shams Story

Roya Shams is a girl from Afghanistan who as of 2012 is living in Ottawa, Canada. As a young girl growing up in Afghanistan’s second largest city, Kandahar, she was one of few who were being taught to read and write, and speak English. Her opportunity to do this was in large part due to her father’s on-going support for her education. He believed that girls have the right to an education, despite societal customs in parts of Afghanistan which often do not support educating young girls and women.

Roya shared her father’s beliefs and as a result was hopeful, ambitious, and determined to study to become a politician. Sadly, Roya’s father was killed for his beliefs which scared Roya and her family. She wanted to pursue her goals and continue to be educated but knew that was not going to be possible in Afghanistan. With the help of a Toronto Star reporter, Roya successfully left Afghanistan and began attending high school in Ottawa. It was without a doubt a huge change for her. There were gaps in her education compared to what she was learning at school in Canada and she had not yet perfected English. She did not let this stop her, though. She found tutors, took extra English as a Second Language courses and studied hard. As a result of her strength and perseverance she will complete her high school education in 2015.

Share Roya’s story with your unit. Discuss the idea of Roya being a hero for other girls. Her courage, strength and hard work are incredible displays of heroism and inspiring, regardless of the obstacles or challenges that may stand in the way.

For further information on Roya, visit these sites, and if possible, share these videos with you unit:

- Roya shares her first two months in Canada
- What Roya has learned about leadership
- Canadian students support Roya (video)

LITERARY HEROES AND AUTHORS

Female Authors

- J.K. Rowling - author of Harry Potter series, who was living with very limited means before she became author of the best-selling book series in history
- L.M. Montgomery - Canadian author of Anne of Green Gables book series
- Beatrix Potter - author of the Peter Rabbit children’s book series
- Suzanne Collins - author of The Hunger Games book series
- Harper Lee - author of To Kill a Mockingbird (Pulitzer Prize winning author)
- Beverley Cleary - one of America’s most successful authors of children’s literature (Ramona Quimby series)
- Anne Frank - author of The Diary of Anne Frank

Female Fictional Characters

- Katniss Everdeen, lead character in The Hunger Games series
- Hermione Granger, one of the lead characters in the Harry Potter series
- Nancy Drew, lead character in the mystery book series Nancy Drew
- Anne Shirley, lead character in the Anne of Green Gables stories
- Matilda Wormwood, lead character in Roald Dahl’s story Matilda
Danika’s Story

Danika Bax is a Brownie with the 2nd Ailsa Craig Brownies in Ontario. In August 2013, Danika submitted her application for a TD Friends of the Environment Tree Planting Grant, concerned that a native species in her community was about to become extinct. She stated, “I want to help save the rusty patched bumble bee because it is so important for our ecosystem to have these great pollinators. We need them to pollinate so we can have plants and food. Planting native trees and shrubs will provide them with a sustainable food source.”

Even though Danika was only eight years old, she worked with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority to lead the project, which she cleverly named “Trees for Bees.” They planted at the Lambton Shores, due to its close proximity to the Pinery Provincial Park, home to the endangered bees. It is close to water and is protected by pine trees.

With Danika at the forefront, the 2nd Ailsa Craig Brownies invited community members such as siblings, parents, and neighbours to come out to the event to learn and lend a hand in support of their native ecosystem. The project turned out to be a huge success, with the 2nd Ailsa Craig Brownies planting 100 trees that will support the local environment and the endangered rusty patched bumble bees.