

## WELCOMING GIRLS WITH **Wheelchairs** INTO YOUR TROOP

There are many different disabilities and medical conditions which may cause required use of a wheelchair short-term or long-term to aid in recovery and/or general mobility. People who use wheelchairs may or may not be able to walk independently or with assistance. Their wheelchair may be manually used or electronically run.

### **Some suggestions and strategies for preparing for and including girls with wheelchairs in your troop:**

1. Ask before offering help with transportation (pushing the wheelchair).
2. Adapt activities as needed for those with special mobility needs.
3. Include her in all activities as much as possible so she doesn't feel singled out – our GSCTX camps are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant and offer facilities and activities for those with wheelchairs and other special needs to stay and participate in.
4. Keep the girl's line-of-vision and reachability in mind – she has a shorter stature in the wheelchair and may not be able to see as well as those standing or be able to reach for something out of a convenient location.
5. Before travelling to a new location, be sure to check for wheelchair accessible entryways and exits as well as restrooms.
6. Unless the girl and her parent/guardian prefer confidentiality within the troop, have the girl share about her differing abilities and special needs with the troop safely and allow the other girls to ask questions in a sensitive and caring manner to better understanding and allow everyone to work together as a troop to help everyone's needs be met.
7. Always consult with the parent/guardian beforehand to be sure you're providing for the girl's needs to the best of your ability—they will know the best methods and strategies to help their child.

For more resources on wheelchair etiquette and safety please visit Para Quad <<http://www.paraquad.org.au/top-tips-for-wheelchair-etiquette>> and WheelchairNet <[http://www.wheelchairnet.org/wcn\\_townhall/docs/etiquette.html](http://www.wheelchairnet.org/wcn_townhall/docs/etiquette.html)>.

If you have other questions or concerns you may contact the GSFA committee via email at [gsfa@gsctx.org](mailto:gsfa@gsctx.org) or GSCTX at [customercare@gsctx.org](mailto:customercare@gsctx.org) or via phone at 1-800-733-0011.

This document is not intended to replace or supersede any doctor's instructions nor should it in any way be taken as medical advice or directions. This resource is a suggestion for GSCTX volunteers to use while welcoming girls to their troops with special needs and is for informational and educational purposes only. Please follow a parent/guardian's instructions in the medical care of their child and make sure you always have the appropriate medical and troop permission forms completed and available for emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.