

# ABILITIES DIGEST



Prepared. For Life.® Vol. 4, No. 2

Fall 2017  BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

## From the Editor

While Abilities Digest has continued to produce and distribute stories through its page on Facebook and through the new AbleScouts.org blog, regular newsletter distribution did not take place as scheduled. This was due to organizational changes and other unforeseen circumstances. We resume publication with this extra-large issue.

## Recognizing Abilities

### Woods Services Award Deadline: December 31, 2017

The Boy Scouts of America presents the Woods Services Award to one adult each year to recognize exceptional service to Scouts with disabilities. Nominations should be received by the end of this year to be considered for the 2018 award. Each council may submit a single nomination each year. The online application form provides complete instructions.

### 2017 Recipient Ralph N. Renbock

Mr. Renbock has been nothing short of monumental in his contributions to Scouts with disabilities in the North-east Illinois Council. An Eagle Scout, former Committee Chair, and Assistant Scoutmaster for his two sons, Ralph joined Scouting in 1943 and has had continuous membership since. He began his service to Scouts with disabilities

## In This Issue

- Recognizing Abilities:** The 2017 Woods Services Award was presented to Ralph N. Rehbock of the North-east Illinois Council. Be sure to submit nominations for the annual Torch of Gold and Woods Services Awards.
- Adapting Activities:** First steps in accommodating Scouts with special needs; sign language for Scouting events.
- Enhancing Awareness:** Importance of using proper words when leading Scouts with special needs; behavior contracts and individualized advancement plans; video portrays autism to young people.
- Adapting Advancement:** Meeting advancement requirements "with no exceptions," a handy table summarizing advancement adaptations, and special needs on the trail to Eagle.
- Awareness Events:** Special needs and disabilities at the 2017 National Jamboree: one Scouter's experience and a glimpse at the disAbilities Awareness Challenge.
- Helpful Links:** Accessing Disabilities Awareness materials.

in 1978 when he responded to an article about the need of a Scoutmaster for a troop sponsored by a local school which served youth with developmental disabilities. He served there as Scoutmaster for 10 years before becoming the leader Post (now Crew) 30 in 1988. Combined, these units serve about two thirds of the developmentally disabled population of the Riverside Foundation in Lincolnshire, Illinois.

In addition to leading regular meetings, Ralph coordinates four special events for disabled Scouts across the council. These events include a day at one of the local council camps, the Fall Dance, the Winter Barn Dance, and the Pinewood Derby. He utilizes more traditional Scout troops to help with the coordination and execution of these events. Ralph also organized the council's first ever committee focused on serving Scouts with disabilities. He has served as the chairman since its inception in 1990. Among his many contributions to Scouting is his mentorship of Scouts with developmental disabilities, enabling them to attain the rank of Eagle Scout. Through his efforts, it is estimated that Ralph has personally had an impact on the Scouting experience of over 12,000 Scouts.

Over the years Mr. Renbock has been recognized with many awards including the Shofar Award, The Phoenix Award, the District Award of Merit, the Silver Beaver Award, the Torch of Gold, the President's Award, and even recognition by the Office of the Illinois Governor in 2014.

## **Torch of Gold Award**



The Torch of Gold is a council-level distinguished award of the Boy Scouts of America to recognize adults for exceptional service and leadership in working with Scouts who have disabilities. Each council may recognize one Scouter per year with the award. Details are listed on the nomination form, [available online](#).

The nominee must be a registered Scouter with at least three years of volunteer service supporting Scouting with disabilities. The service may be in any Scouting leadership capacity related to Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers with disabilities, including educating other Scouters about disabilities and working with youth who have disabilities.

Councils that award the Torch of Gold Award should consider nominating the winner for the national Woods Services Award.

## **Special Needs Scouting Service Awards**



The National Disabilities Awareness Subcommittee would like to keep track of how many of these Special Needs Scouting Service Awards are earned. Please send a brief email to [disabilitiesawareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilitiesawareness@scouting.org) (SUBJECT: "SNSSA") with the council name and number of knots awarded.

# Adapting Activities

## Accommodations for Scouts: First Steps

A typical troop has Scouts across the spectrum of behavior and maturity. About one in eight Scouts may have a special need or disability that calls for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at school. When we accommodate the latter, we help more typical but less mature Scouts as well.

Be sure to accommodate Scouts when completing advancement requirements. While written requirements must be followed to the letter, accommodations may be used where appropriate. For example, a list might not need to be a written list or the Scout might not be the one actually writing things down.

To insure success for all Scouts, some accommodations may be necessary to assist with completion of a task. Some guiding principles are:

- Not all Scouts with special needs require accommodations.
- Ask parents for guidance as they may have ideas you haven't thought of.
- Be respectful of the Scout's culture and ethnicity.
- Integrate accommodations into meetings and outings.
- The goal is to decrease a Scout's frustration.

Accommodations often fall into five categories: Timing, Scheduling, Setting, Presentation, and Response. We examine these below.

Use **Timing** accommodations when:

the Scout requires more time to read text, write responses, use electronic devices or require assistance to stay on track.

**Accommodations:** Allow more time to complete a task, change the time when subject is presented, or allow the Scout to complete the task in small time blocks.



Use **Scheduling** accommodations when:

coordination with the effects of medication needs to be considered or for Scouts who have a low frustration tolerance.

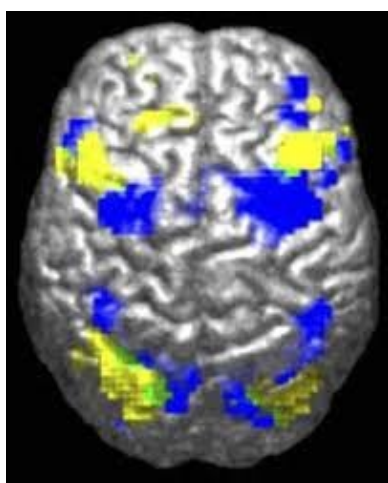
**Accommodations:** Schedule tasks when medication is most effective, utilize active participation during times when the Scout is likely to move around, and provide frequent breaks.

Use **Setting** accommodations when:

a Scout has difficulty focusing attention in a group setting and other Scouts may be distracted by the accommodation.

**Accommodations:** Personal assistance including supervision and cues, preferential seating, lighting and other environmental factors, and possibly a different location.

Use **Presentation** accommodations when:



a Scout has specific sensory needs, difficulty reading or understanding assignments, or following directions.

**Accommodations:** Change the group size, determine the rate of introduction of new skills, lecture, or demonstration, teach prerequisite skills, provide visual/auditory cues, use BookShare or Braille, adapt existing materials, provide additional resources, use games, simulations, role-playing, or activity-based lessons.

Use **Response** accommodations when:

there is a physical or sensory disability that limits the Scout's ability to respond, memorize, put things in sequence, orient direction, organize things, or other problems that may interfere with successful performance.

**Accommodations:** Allow the Scout to record answers, respond orally, use assistive electronic devices (computer, communication device, etc), make projects instead of written papers, shorten assignments, use reminder prompts, scribe answers, use adapted materials such as colored ropes, or use light weight equipment, allow the Scout to point to answers or give multiple choices instead of requesting open-ended responses.

Sometimes using an accommodation may require other actions. Using these accommodations will hopefully decrease frustration for the Scout, although it may not necessarily eliminate the frustration.

*This article is based on presentation handout materials that accompany the "Program Planning for Scouts with Disabilities" and "Camping for Scouts with Disabilities" presentations posted at [Scouting.org](http://Scouting.org).*



## Sign Language for Scouting Events

Scouts, Scouters and family members who are deaf or hard of hearing present new challenges for many units. Units, districts and councils aren't legally obligated to provide a sign language interpreter for deaf participants and often can't afford a professional, certified interpreter, yet we want to include everyone in the Scouting experience. We benefit both deaf and hearing participants when we make accommodations. These can range from pre-printed materials and visual aids to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

There are ASL interpreters, or interpreters in training, available in many communities. Ask among your volunteers for someone skilled in ASL who is willing to interpret. If not, check your local college for an ASL interpreting program and ask if they have a field experience office. Like student teaching, interpreters do

field work to gain experience. Put a request through their office with the following information:

- Name of event
- Type of event- Include information like "outside regardless of weather"
- Address and any details related to it
- Type of sign language being used — do not answer this question yourself unless you are the one requiring ASL. Instead, ask the person who needs the services. Even better, you should include the deaf person in preparing the request.
- Extra items needed —light in a dark room, seating arrangement, meeting arrangement, and etc.
- Person in charge before, during, and after the event, along with the name of the person(s) who will use the service and their contact information in both email and cell phone number.

### **About *Abilities Digest***

*Abilities Digest* is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Disabilities Awareness Committee. Its mission is to expand membership through helping parents and Scouting volunteers to improve their understanding, knowledge, and skills related to including and serving the special needs population. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute four issues of *Abilities Digest* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at [disabilities.awareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilities.awareness@scouting.org).

- Length of time – consider feeding them if an all day event.
- Youth protection – provide a summary of Scouting youth protection requirements if the interpreter will stay overnight or be working directly with youth.
- Other requirements – indicate appropriate clothing, especially for outdoor or overnight events. Explain sleeping arrangements and make sure the interpreter owns the necessary gear or has it provided.

Include anything that can help an interpreter prepare – examples: Scouting lingo, pdf books, syllabus, and so on.

Be aware that in field experience situations, you are not always guaranteed an interpreter. Put your requests in at least a month or two ahead of time and consider the college semester. You are less likely to get an interpreter over summer or during finals week.

## A Different Listening Experience

While ASL is “American” sign language, it is not just English converted to hand signals. ASL is its own language. Some deaf and hard of hearing people learn ASL as their first language and haven’t mastered written English. Pre-printed materials are not always the right substitute for ASL.

In ASL, people listen with their eyes. When demonstrating a skill like knot tying, it is important to keep the explanation separate from the demonstration. People using ASL must watch the explanation and demonstration separately.

### **Managing Subscriptions to *Abilities Digest***

***Abilities Digest* is designed for council and district disabilities awareness committees, related staff advisors, and any leader who would offer a Scouting program to youth who have special needs. Any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.**

**Subscribing.** Send a message to [disabilities.awareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilities.awareness@scouting.org), with “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.

**Unsubscribing.** To decline future issues please reply and enter “REMOVE” in the subject line. We will remove the subscription within the next two weeks.

**Receiving Multiple Copies.** If you receive *Abilities Digest* at more than one email address, choose the one to be removed and reply with “REMOVE” in the subject line. Include a message requesting that we remove only that email address.

**Duplicate Copies.** If you receive more than one copy of *Abilities Digest* at the same email address, please reply to all but one of them with “DUPLICATE” in the subject line.

**Address Change.** If you want *Abilities Digest* sent to a different address, reply and enter “ADDRESS CHANGE” in the subject line. In your message, enter your council name and the email address you prefer.



# Enhancing Awareness

## Language is Important When Leading Scouts with Special Needs

We never call Scouts with special needs “special-needs Scouts.” Why, you ask?

That’s because word choice matters and Scouters on the Disabilities Awareness Subcommittee recommend using **person-first language** that describes what a person has, not who a person is.

“Even though it does get a bit wordy and awkward in everyday speech,” committee chairman Tony Mei says, “this emphasizes the personhood of the individual and places the disability as a secondary condition that the individual must live with.”

Usually, this means sticking with phrases that start with “a person who ...” or “a person with ...” or “a person who has ....”



Other examples of the right and wrong word choices:

Don’t refer to two groups of people as “disabled” and “normal.”

Refer to them as “people with a disability” and “people without a disability.”

Never call someone “retarded,” “slow” or a “special person.” He is a person with an intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disability.

Someone isn’t “wheelchair-bound.” He “uses a wheelchair.”

It isn’t a “handicapped” parking space or bathroom. It’s “accessible.”

She isn’t a “midget.” She is “short of stature” or a “little person.”

This is not about political correctness; it’s about treating people with respect.

It can be stressful wondering whether you’re using the right word. **Your safest bet? Just ask the person** — or his friend or parents.

“The best advice I can give is to ask the person how they prefer to be called,” Mei says. “You may be casually surprised. They may say, ‘Call me John and, by the way, I’m autistic.’” Some communities of people with special needs prefer particular terms. The deaf community prefers the word “deaf” instead of a person-first phrase.

*Based on an article by Brian Wendell in [Scoutingmagazine.org](http://Scoutingmagazine.org).*

## Behavior Contracts and Scouts with Special Needs

This is a question sent through the Disabilities Awareness email address at Scouting.org.

Dear Disabilities Awareness:

Our Troop currently has a round 50 registered Scouts and a strong backing of Scouters supporting the Troop. We are interested in creating a Conduct and Discipline Policy.

There is a lot of available information and numerous recommendations on discipline policies for typical troops. These do not address Scouts with diagnosed behavior problems, learning disabilities and other handicaps that have an effect on Troop meetings

and outings. We would like to create a Behavioral Policy to help all parties involved when we have Scouts with issues, whether the problems are known to the leaders or not.

We want a Behavioral Policy that takes disabilities into account. Different disabilities and diagnoses may need to be considered in a whole different manner, both in terms of potential behaviors and in the actions needed to 'discipline.' Most importantly, we need to educate all the leaders, adults, and the other Scouts on how to support these individuals.

Signed, *Busy Troop*.

Dear Busy Troop:

First of all, you cannot set up a behavioral policy based on a Scout's personal disability. All Scouts must be treated the same. They all have to follow the same rules as any other person in the Troop. Disruptive behavior is handled individually and with the parent/advocate involved. Pulling the offending individual aside and in private with a second leader/adult present, you can talk to him about the offence. Refer back to the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Identify which part of the law or Oath is in question. Talk about alternative ways it could have been handled. If learning impaired, write it down and maybe have him carry it on an index card. If the offence occurs again, have him look at the card as a reminder. These are just suggestions; also take a look at the article on accommodations in this issue of **Abilities Digest**.

Instead of a troop-wide or individualized conduct or discipline policy, consider instead the Individualized Scouting Advancement Plan (ISAP). While it's best to fill them out when a Scout enters the unit, the ISAP may be used later. Fill in the plan with the help of the parent/guardian. Write up specific plans of action, identify problem behaviors, triggers, and redirecting actions that work with this youth. The ISAP may also include consequences, but be clear and agree on them beforehand. Discipline should always be carried out individually, like with any other Scout.





## Autism: Amazing Things Happen!



A remarkable video was released in April for World Autism Month. Targeted at a young audience, it explains invisible disabilities, focusing on autism. The video portrays autism as an amazing difference, not a terrible one. [The writer/producer/director](#) has included closed captions and distributes the video in multiple languages.

## Adapting Advancement Meeting Requirements “With No Exceptions”

The following was originally published in the May-June 2017 issue of *Advancement News*.

“...meet the requirements as they are written, with no exception.”



The quote above from the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.2.2.0, at first glance may sound harsh, restrictive, and could even leave one wondering how a Scout with special needs can meet requirements that sometimes seem too tough.

Well, with a little bit of creativity and teamwork, Scouts and leaders have found exceptional ways to complete requirements without exception.

Communication with the Scout and his family are important ingredients that can really help. Using resources such as school teachers and other community groups and leaders is really important, too. Another great resource could be your council's Special Needs Committee .

We have heard great stories over the years about individuals with disabilities finding creative ways to meet requirements. For example, a Scout who can't move his hands or arms to tie a knot, has learned the steps required and can dictate them to a friend who tied the knot for him. Similarly, other Scouts have used communication devices to work with an able-bodied partner to complete other requirements.

We really want to do all we can to enable Scouts with disabilities to advance in rank and complete merit badges, all while upholding the high standards of the badges. Every so often, we encounter a case where that's just not possible, and that is the time to submit a request for alternative requirements or alternate badges.

*Guide to Advancement* topic 10.2.2.2 provides clear instructions on how to request alternative requirements for boys working on the ranks of Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class. For ranks above First Class, the re-

requirements cannot be modified; however, a Scout can request authorization to complete an alternative merit badge in place of one that just is not possible for him to complete. Again, the **GTA** can help you navigate and understand this process.

One thing that is important to remember is that advancement is not meant to be easy for any Scout and that is why only a very small percentage of Scouts achieve the rank of Eagle. Meanwhile, it is equally important to remember that advancement should never get in the way of providing new, meaningful, and fun experiences for all Scouts.

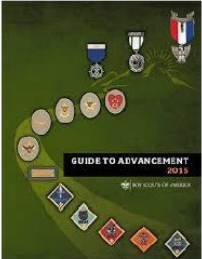
**A personal view:**

“As an individual living with a physical disability, I use a wheelchair for mobility. I can still hike (pushing my chair instead of walking), I can bike (using a handcycle instead of a [pedal] bike), I can camp in a tent (even if I need a little help getting in and out), and I can creatively find a way to do most things I want to.”

**Advancement Accommodations: the 30,000 Foot View**

Special needs advocates at the National Capital Area Council have produced a simple chart to summarize advancement accommodations available to Scouts.

**Boy Scouts Special Needs: The View from 30,000 Feet**

	Special Needs (Guide to Advancement—G2A §10)			④ STEM (Nova & Supernova Awards)	⑤ Delay through No Fault/Choice of the Scout (G2A §9)
	① Cub Scouts	② Boy Scouts	③ Venturers Sea Scouts		
				Not actually Special Needs But Relevant and Applicable to all Scouts	
 Merit Badges		Request to Substitute for Eagle-Required MB(s)		Counselor’s / Mentor’s Discretion:	Request Extension
Advancement Requirements	“Do Your Best”	Request to Modify	Request to Modify	Adjust the challenge according to the Scout	
Registration “Beyond the Age of Eligibility” (i.e., as a youth)	Request Council Approval (Not called an “Extension”)				
Approved by →	Cubmaster	Council		Counselor / Mentor	National

For more information  
[ncacbsa.org/advancement/special-needs-scouting](http://ncacbsa.org/advancement/special-needs-scouting)  
[ncacbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/NCAC\\_Special\\_Needs\\_Scouting\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://ncacbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/NCAC_Special_Needs_Scouting_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

© 20 Apr 17

## Special Needs on the Trail to Eagle

*Communication and Creativity are the Keys to Helping Scouts with Special Needs Advance Along the Trail to Eagle*

The advancement program is meant to be challenging for every Scout. Those challenges can become even larger for Scouts with special needs. Since the **Guide to Advancement** clearly states that all requirements have to be met, communication between the Scout, his parents, unit leaders, and even educators can lead to real success stories.

Here are some tips to help:

- Work together as a team to develop a year round advancement plan just like schools do with an IEP. Everyone works better when they have a plan to follow!
- Review rank requirements to determine the ones that can easily be met and which will be more challenging.
- Use all of the resources available to assist a Scout complete the tougher requirements. Often this will require thinking outside of the box.
- Allow other Scouts in the unit to help with this process too, as this can provide them with a unique learning opportunity.
- Recognize that there will be some requirements that won't be able to be completed by every Scout, so plan ahead and allow time to apply for council approval of modifications of requirements or alternative merit badges.
- Don't wait until a Scout with Special Needs turns 17 to register him to continue advancing "beyond the age of eligibility." This option is explained in Section 10 of the **Guide to Advancement** and will take pressure off of the Scout, his unit, district and council if you do this earlier on.
- Lastly, seek help from other unit leaders who have had success in this area. We have seen great examples of a Scout who uses a wheelchair leading a hike, a Scout who uses a computer as a communication device making a "speech" or leading a meeting, or a Scout with visual impairments seeing the stars and constellations through cut out paper plates.



Recognize that these are opportunities and not roadblocks. Scouts and leaders should be confident that advancement challenges have solutions when we work together as a team. Look for resources at the troop, district, council, and national level to support advancement for Scouts with special needs.

# Awareness Events: 2017 National Jamboree

## The Jamboree as Seen by a Scouter with Disabilities

*Scott Hellen, a National Jamboree staffer with limited mobility, shares observations on his Jamboree experience.*

We all have preconceived expectations of what our first time on staff at a National Jamboree will be like. I was looking forward to working with hundreds of Scouts from around the country and abroad as they came through the Disabilities Awareness Challenge, dAC. I also wanted to meet the adult Scouters who came from various locations and diverse backgrounds to serve as dAC staff. I learned fast that reality does not always meet one's expectations.



After arriving, I was asked to step (or in my case, roll) out of working the dAC and into a new position as **accessibility coordinator** for the entire Jamboree. I was tasked to do what I could to make the entire Jamboree as accessible as possible to all who attended. This was a challenge in many ways. I already struggled to get myself through a day at the Jamboree with my own physical disabilities. I used my wheelchair and electric mobility scooter to “do my best.”

“Be Prepared” is the Scout motto and one that I try and live by. It is very important to be prepared if you have a disability. Scouts and Scouters with disabilities should always let staff and camps know

well in advance about a disability and the need for “reasonable accommodations” to attend a camp. A reasonable accommodation modifies the environment and/or program so a person with a special need or disability can participate to the fullest.

For my remaining comments I will abbreviate “Special Needs and DisAbilities” as SND.

### My new Jamboree job

My new job was to make arrangements for people I did not know, in an unfamiliar environment, with staff I had never met. I had a hard job, but so did the Jamboree volunteers who worked with me. I added to their already overbooked day by challenging them to set up accommodations for others with SND.

It's not always practical to provide accommodations a disabled person might request. Some accommodations cost far too much or alter the proposed purpose of an event. Accommodations that give the person with the SND an undue advantage are also inappropriate.

Some accommodations were already available at the Summit. Most bathrooms had accessible toilets and showers. This helped many with limited mobility. Being accessible to some did not guarantee accessibility for all: the



path to the bathroom might not always line up with its concrete floor, creating a barrier for wheelchair users. Jamboree staff could often fix this problem with a ramp.

In other situations it was impossible to make an otherwise reasonable accommodation work. It was not because the staff didn't want to do it. Often the change would have cost too much time and/or money since the Jamboree was already in progress.

A feature of the shuttle bus system offers a simple example. The busses used colors of the rainbow as identification. This posed serious problems for people with color blindness. A correction would have required changes to signs and schedules on busses, bus stops, and the Jamboree app. There was no practical way to make the change once the Jamboree was under way.

## Scout Spirit for the Win

While I worked hard in my role of making the Jamboree a successful experience for Scouts with SND, I never worked alone. Time and time again I saw Scouts reaching out to others with SND and asking what they could do to help. Sometimes it was simply holding open a door to let a person having difficulties in the busy environment go first. In most cases the grounds were well maintained and the staff were ready for everyone. They were proud to help ALL Scouts.



Some scouts had visual disabilities. They were challenged with color coded maps and directions, small print, and poor lighting while navigating through crowds. They found assistance from people who were **Trustworthy**.

Some Scouts with SND take more time than the average Scout to trust another person and discuss the accommodation they need. The staff worked on these relationships and helped out many with SND. A Scout is **Loyal**.

I encountered a wonderful group of staff at Bravo 1. Many units were assigned to this site if they had Scouts or leaders who self-identified as having a special need or disability. The Bravo 1 team worked hard to provide reasonable accommodations. A Scout is **Helpful**.

One of the best accommodations could be implemented any time and cost nothing. The secret was a smile followed by a little conversation. "How's your day going? Enjoying the Jamboree? Can I help you?" A Scout is **Friendly**.

Some accommodations are easy to set up without much planning such as having someone help a person through the cafeteria line, or in and out a door if they are in a wheelchair. A Scout is **Courteous**.

To follow through with this, Scouts or leaders might walk a Scout to their next location, especially those with a cognitive or processing disability. I saw a lot of staff and participants do this. A Scout is **Kind**.

Peer buddies, unit leaders, staff members, and total strangers regularly followed through with requests for reasonable accommodations, large or small, time after time, day after day, to make the Jamboree accessible for ALL. A Scout is **Obedient**.



It could take a lot of time and a lot of talk to set up accommodations. I would prepare myself to work with staff and figure out how to convince them to spend their time and resources to make the Jamboree more accessible, sometimes for just a single Scout. It takes a lot of patience, especially when a fellow Jamboree staffer won't fulfill a seemingly reasonable request. We must always remember: A Scout is **Cheerful**.

Some accommodations are well known but take planning, such as a raised toilet seat and grab bars in the latrine area, but we can't make every latrine accessible. We scouted out their locations before the participants arrived, made notes of where they were needed, and how locations could be improved. During the Jamboree either the staff or I put up simple paper signs with arrows or directions to locate the nearest accessible bathroom. A Scout is **Thrifty**.

Scouting requires the "Buddy System" for good reasons. Scouts with SND often need help getting through an event as big, new, and crowded as the Jamboree. These "Peer Buddies" show that a Scout is **Brave**.

One easy accommodation was to work with staff and make sure their areas were picked up, organized, and well laid out. This helps Scouts with physical disabilities but also those that deal poorly with clutter. A Scout is **Clean**.

Time and time again, people took the time to make the Jamboree as accessible as possible to ALL Scouts. Following the Scout Oath and Law is not just the way a Scout is supposed to act, it is the character they should have. In my opinion, character is also how you interact with and treat others. Good character applies the Oath and Law throughout the day, no matter how tired you are, how busy you are, or whether the person you meet is a stranger, a friend, or a person with a SND. That is the Scouting Way. A Scout is **Reverent**.

I want to thank all the Scouts, adult Scouters, and staff that worked with all the Scouts with SND each and every day at the Jamboree. You set the example to everyone that people with SND just want to be treated like everyone else.



## The 2017 Jamboree's disAbilities Awareness Challenge



An excerpt from a blog post in **Bryan on Scouting** by Bryan Wendell, July 20, 2017. The Challenge had nearly 9,000 participants.

Madison Trimble is slowly but confidently making her way around a simple maze of PVC pipes laid out on the ground.

Every few steps, her feet or her bright yellow cane bumps against a pipe, and she shifts her direction slightly.

When she gets to the end, Madison, an 18-year-old Venturer from Crew 5275C of the

Alamo Area Council, takes off the blindfold. She looks behind her.

"That was hard!" she says. "You have to use your other senses, like hearing and feel."

That's exactly the point of the disAbilities Awareness Challenge area at the 2017 National Jamboree. Venturers and Scouts experience the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities or special needs.

After completing any or all of the 19 different activities, Scouts and Venturers leave with a greater appreciation for those who may be different from them.

"We are classified as one of the exhibits and displays, but we are an action center" says Tony Mei, the volunteer in charge of the disAbilities Awareness Challenge.

The 19 activities include Beep Baseball, where blindfolded participants use their hearing to try to hit a beeping softball; Home Front Challenge, where Scouts discover how simple tasks, like opening a freezer, are more difficult for wheelchair users; and the ADHD and Autism tent, where Scouts experience some of the ways those brain disorders affect their fellow Scouts and Venturers.

"The common denominator is, 'I will never look at someone with a disability the same again. Now I understand,'" Mei says. "It's uplifting. It's positive."

Wheelchair Basketball is among the most popular stations. Carter Pate, a 14-year-old Life Scout from Troop 2406 of the Heart of America Council, says it was both fun and challenging.

"I used brakes to turn sharply, and over time I got better at it," he says. "It does change the way I look at them, because I realized all the things they have to consider in order to move in any direction.

"Everything is like a puzzle," he says. "It's so much more complicated."

## Adaptive Archery

Beginning in 2001, every Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill included a one-armed archery activity. When the Jamboree moved to the Summit in 2013 there was no enthusiasm for installing the fixture on the archery range. That attitude changed in 2017. Through the efforts of Charlie and Andy Mann, and the coordination of chair Tony Mei of dAC, and Rich Rost, the chair of the archery display, the event is once again part of the Jamboree. Rost observed, "It was exhilarating to help differently abled young people to shoot! I look forward to developing even more adaptable devices and methods.."



## Helpful Links

Here are links to current materials to aid volunteers and Scouts with disabilities:

### Official Materials Posted on Scouting.org

Scouting with Disabilities landing page: [www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx)

A variety of materials can be found on this page, including the new Scouting with Disabilities training presentations.

### Resources from Articles

*Amazing Things Happen* video on autism [amazingthingshappen.tv](http://amazingthingshappen.tv)

AbleScouts: *Abilities Digest* articles posted online – [ablescouts.org](http://ablescouts.org)

### Other Web Resources

Working with Scouts with disabilities - [www.wwswd.org/](http://www.wwswd.org/)

Autism Empowerment website - [www.AutismEmpowerment.org](http://www.AutismEmpowerment.org)

Autism and Scouting website - [www.autismempowerment.org/autism-scouting-program/](http://www.autismempowerment.org/autism-scouting-program/)

Children with Special Needs - [www.childrenwithspecialneeds.com/disability-info/](http://www.childrenwithspecialneeds.com/disability-info/)

## Social Media



Twitter: @AbilitiesDigest

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Abilities-Digest/824105334298165](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Abilities-Digest/824105334298165)



Email your comments and questions to: [disabilitiesawareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilitiesawareness@scouting.org)