



The Girl Scout Guide to Helping Others During the COVID-19 Pandemic

It's in our Girl Scout DNA to help in a time of crisis. For those that are healthy and want to help others, there are multiple ways to help those in need during the novel coronavirus outbreak. But how can we do so responsibly? In some cases, you don't even need to step outside your home to help in a meaningful way.

This guide is a starting point for ideas you and your family can contribute to the community, whether it's safely helping with COVID-19 outbreak efforts or taking action for community betterment.

Please be sure to stay safe and responsible while you help! Always follow all government regulations from organizations like the CDC, WHO and your county or city. Don't forget about the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints, and remember that while Girl Scouts can donate their time and supplies to organizations in need, Girl Scouts may not give monetary donations to other organizations.

In addition to making a difference and carrying out the Girl Scout tradition of giving back, you may also be eligible to earn the Community Service Bar. While you're at it, you can take it a step further by creating a sustainable solution to a problem with a Highest Awards project. Learn more about how you can take action with a Gold Award, Silver Award or Bronze Award project on our website, gssjc.org.

TIP: While you help, think about how these things correspond to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.



8 Ways to Help in Your Neighborhood or Community

1

Donate to and/or volunteer at the food bank

Note: Check with your local food bank for needed food and to ask for age requirement for volunteering. You may also want to ensure they have put in measures to keep you safe through social distancing.

Houston Food Bank <https://houstonfoodbank.civicore.com/index.php?section=volOpportunities&action=calendar>

KCM food pantry <https://ktcm.org/volunteer/>

Target Hunger <https://www.targethunger.org/volunteer/family-volunteering>

2

Donate blood

Notes: Check with your local blood center for age, weight and health requirements. Right now, blood banks are facing a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations during this coronavirus outbreak. For that reason, healthy individuals are needed to donate now. The blood banks also want to ensure the public that donating is a safe process and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood or platelets.

American Red Cross <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>

Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center giveblood.org/

3

Donate to a homeless shelter

Note: Check with your local shelter for needed supplies and to ask for age requirement for volunteering. You may also want to ensure they have put in measures to keep you safe through social distancing.

Star of Hope <https://www.sohmission.org/ways-to-give/urgent-ongoing-needs/>

4

Spread kindness and uplifting messages

Paint kindness stones and leave them around your neighborhood. Make inspirational posters and put them around our community. Reach out to your local HOA, apartment complex or other oversight entity for permission and ideas!

5

Be tech support

If you're technologically savvy, offer to help a neighbor, friend or relative get set up and act as their "tech support" hotline. The elderly population is at high risk. Show them how to order their groceries or get audiobooks from their local library so they stay home and safe. You might even consider reaching out to a local assisted living facility to see if you can do a tele-visit with residents to keep their spirits up. Maybe they can teach YOU a skill, like knitting

6

Consider fostering an animal or donate pet food and supplies for pet owners in need

Notes: Check with your local shelter for needed supplies and to ask for age requirement for volunteering. Houston animal shelters are full due to coronavirus concerns and for that reason there is a high need for fostering. If you would like to consider fostering, please keep mind that in many cases shelters will provide vet care and supplies if needed.

Houston Humane Society <https://www.houstonhumane.org/about-us/pet-pantry>

Houston SPCA www.houstonspca.org/adopt

7

Be a good neighbor

Offer to help neighbors walk their dog, do yard work or run errands for them – especially at-risk neighbors. You can also bake them cookies or swap books and movies. Just make sure you pick one neighbor to dedicate your time to for any face-to-face contact so you can participate in responsible social distancing. (But you can always do doorstep drop-offs or outdoor tasks for several!)

8

Be prepared but don't hoard

Hoarding and preparation are two very different things – the recommendation from the CDC is to be prepared with enough necessary supplies for about two weeks' worth of food. This is great preparedness practice for hurricane season, too!



Ways to Help Without Leaving Home

Kindness Challenge – Record a get-well video. Include your first name, troop number and a get-well-soon message for people who are sick.



Say thank you – Write a thank you note to healthcare providers, food bank volunteers, teachers or a troop leader. Note: Check to see if the organization will accept the physical copy by mail or if you should scan/email them copies of these instead. Be creative and say thank you to anyone who is on the “front lines” helping keep everyone safe or supplied.

Combat loneliness by writing a letter, drawing a picture or starting a story – Send these to assisted living facilities, hospitals, residential treatment centers for kids or other similar organizations. For the story, you can also include a stamped envelope so that they can add to the story and send it back to you. Note: Check to see if the organization will accept the physical copy by mail or if you should scan/email them copies of these instead.



Stay connected by video chatting – Check in with relatives, your troop, friends, etc. Social distancing doesn't have to mean emotional distancing! You could even play a game or have a movie night via a digital connection.

Do some Spring cleaning – Sort through your clothes and toys and make a box of unwanted items to donate. Clean out your bookshelf of older, lightly used DVDs and books and donate them to a local children's hospital.

Make pet toys or shelters to donate to shelters – Did you know you can make dog toys with household items? Here's an idea to get you started: <https://barkpost.com/answers/how-to-make-a-t-shirt-dog-toy/>. DIY shelters: <https://alleycatadvocates.org/communitycat-care-center/creating-winter-shelters/>

Tutor others – If possible, stay connected with other students or your troop members and offer to help tutor your peers in subjects you excel in virtually. You are probably a rock star in a subject someone else might need help in. Starting an online study group is a way to stay connected while helping others.



Share resources – Whether its educational websites, an at-home exercise routine, or community resources, if you find great resources, share them with others!



Spread Kindness & Inspirational Messages – Share uplifting stories or positive affirmations on social media or directly with your family and friends.

Pray or think positive thoughts – For those affected by COVID-19, whether by directly becoming ill or being affected in other ways (i.e. being out of work).



Practice yoga, meditation and deep breaths and encourage others to do the same – Breathing in and out slowly has been shown to reduce stress. Blowing bubbles is a fun way for kids and adults to practice this! Make homemade bubble mix and a homemade wand and leave on the doorstep of families who have young children or seniors. Encourage them to BREATHE and blow bubbles to destress.

Make homemade bookmarks which you can later donate to your local library. Here are some ideas to get you started: <https://homesthetics.net/diy-bookmarks/>



Go on a virtual tour of a National Park and then come up with an environmental protection proposal based on the tour. Here is the website to Yellowstone National Park to get you started: <https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>

Educate and bring awareness through social media, YouTube, etc. Here are some ideas to get you started, but the important part – find something you're passionate about!

- Bring awareness to endangered animals, especially ones that don't widely get attention
- Bring awareness to cyber bullying, then research and share how to effectively report/address it, how to avoid doing it, etc.



Make no-sew, knit or crochet blankets and then donate to a hospital or shelter later.

Learn how here: <https://www.instructables.com/id/No-Sew-Fleece-Blanket-1/>

Plant a garden. Plant a garden in the ground, a raised bed, in containers such as flowerpots, or on a windowsill for someone who otherwise can't.



Give free virtual music lessons or art classes to your friends or troop members



Make self-care, first aid or birthday kits to be donated to homeless shelters. Learn how here: <http://www.volunteer-houston.com/acts-of-charity/insert-homeless-care-package-blog/>

Make non-slip socks for seniors and donate to a nursing home. Learn how here: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Non-Slip-Socks>

