Senior and Ambassador Voice for Animals

Pillar: Outdoors/STEAM

When you've earned this badge, you will better understand animal issues worldwide and know what you can do to help.

Seniors and Ambassadors will follow these steps to earn their badge:

1. Find out about domestic animals. (Discover, Connect, Take Action)

   a. Learn about domesticated animals, Start here: https://www.jyi.org/2012-february/2017/9/17/our-furry-friends-the-history-of-animal-domestication. Find three more sources that help you learn more about domestication vs. tame, why we domesticate, The pros and the cons, etc.

   b. Look at ways people treat these animals. Explore some topics that are considered a necessary part of pet ownership and other behaviors considered controversial by some. Examples can include declawing cats, using a shock collar, keeping exotic animals as pets, the importance of spaying and neutering, crate training, docking puppies' tails or ears, how many pets in one household, breeding vs. adopting etc.

   c. Explore laws both local and federal that are meant to protect animals. Should there be more/less protections for animals? What would you add or take out?

   d. Based on your research, create a Pet's Bill of Rights. Share it with friends and family. Talk to a veterinarian and an animal shelter in your area about your Bill of Rights. Get some different perspectives and revise accordingly. Once you have a solid Bill of Rights based on research, find ways to get the word out about responsible pet ownership.

2. Investigate animals used for science. (Discover, Connect)

   a. What do you think about animals used for science? Write down your thoughts and the whys and why nots for your thoughts.

   b. Now go educate yourself on the pros and cons of utilizing animals.

   c. Read why animals are used in research: https://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/files/2114/6425/3373/Why_are_animals_used_in_scientific_research.pdf

   d. Choose one or two products that you really like to use as part of your beauty routine. It could be soap, shampoo, conditioner, make up brand, facia cleanser or moisturizer, etc. Try to find one that has a label that reads "cruelty-free", "vegan formula" or "produced without animal testing" and one that does not. Research the brands and how they test. Find out what companies do to test their product if they do not use animals.

   e. Revisit your initial thoughts on the matter. Has there been any change in your feelings?

3. Explore animals in husbandry. (Discover, Connect, Take Action)

   a. Learn what animal husbandry is. Learn the importance of it within farming. Learn how zoos and aquariums are playing a bigger role in guarding the dwindling wildlife population.

   b. What are examples of animal husbandry. How are these animals are cared for? When buying products, why are labels like "pasture raised", "cage free", "no antibiotics", "free range", "certified humane raised & handled", "organic", something to be aware of? What should we be looking for? Why? Begin here: https://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/food-labels and here: https://www.aspca.org/shopwithyourheart/consumer-resources/shop-your-heart-brand-list then explore further!

c. Extend your research to find out how zoos and aquariums are playing a bigger role in guarding the dwindling wildlife population.

d. Choose one animal you are interested in as far as husbandry practices, learn more and share what you have learned with friends and family. Educate them on food labels. Be the reason others become more educated about the importance. Make a series of social media posts, make your own commercial to share or a brochure to pass out. Be creative in your approach and see if you can get people you know to change some of their buying practices!

4. Take a look at animals used for sports and entertainment. (Discover, Connect)

a. Choose a couple of the options below to research and learn how animals are used and cared for in the entertainment fields you choose. Explore guidelines, regulations and how the treatment and care are the same or different within the sport or in the entertainment business. What happens if the animal gets hurt? Or what happens if the animal is ready for retirement? Who cares for them in these situations? Where do they go? What are the guidelines for these situations? Is there a lack of guidelines?

1. Dog and/or horse racing
2. Rodeo events
3. Show animals from 4H to amateur and professional events.
4. Sea Life, Circus
5. Animals used in television and movies.

b. What do you think? What are changes you would make? What are the good things happening?

c. Find out what agencies are involved in overseeing what happens with the animals. Are there agencies advocating for better treatment in what you are researching? Who are they and what do they want?

d. Based on what you find, what are people doing right, what is going wrong? What are your thoughts about animals being used in entertainment? Find out what your family and friends think!

5. Look into an animal issue. (Take Action)

a. Look at what The Humane Society of the United States considers its big fights: https://www.humanesociety.org/our-big-fights

b. Decide on an issue you feel strongly about. You have learned a lot from the above activities. Choose one you feel you could contribute to a change. Even if the change is small, big things never happen without the small changes contributing to it!

c. Take that issue you feel strongly about and Take Action to educate and encourage change. Give people ideas they can do that will contribute to better treatment of animals, or to be better pet owners.

When you're finished: Congratulations, you have earned your badge! You can purchase online at https://www.girlscoutshop.com/SENIOR-VOICE-FOR-ANIMALS-BADGE .

You can purchase your Girl Scout Virtual main patch and bars at gsksmo.org/orderpatches

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