

# Helen Keller

*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*

When Helen Keller was young, she became very sick and her illness left her both deaf and blind. Growing up was hard for Helen until she met Anne Sullivan, a teacher that taught her how to communicate. Helen became a very famous speaker and author who made it her life mission to help others who were hearing and visually impaired.

Complete 3-Daisy, 4-Brownie, 5-Junior, 6-Cadette,  
and 7-Senior/Ambassador steps to earn your patch.

All monthly patches are custom designed patches. Once we get the final number of patches after the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, we place an order. Patches take about a month to create and then we mail them to you. You will get a confirmation email once the patches are headed your way.

*Order patch on-line by May 15, 2020 at [www.getyourgirlpower.org](http://www.getyourgirlpower.org)*

## Discover

1. Helen was only two years old when she became very sick and in result became deaf and blind. For many years Helen had very little communication with the rest of the world except for a few hand signs she used with her family. How do you think this must have made Helen feel? What challenges do you think she and her family would have had during this time in her life? Discuss with your troop what it means to be visually and hearing impaired and how hard this must have been for Helen.
2. When Helen was 6 years old Anne Sullivan came to Alabama, where Helen lived, to teach her finger spelling; which is similar to sign language, so she could communicate. Some of the first words that Helen was able to understand were doll, water, milk, teacher and

Helen. Look up the sign language alphabet and learn how to sign these 5 words and then learn how to sign your name!

3. By age 10, with the help of her teacher Anne Sullivan, Helen had mastered reading Braille. What is braille? Who invented it? Research the history of Braille, then discuss with your troop the importance of this invention and the impact it has made.

## Connect

4. Throughout her life Helen overcame her adversities of being visually and hearing impaired. Can you think of any adversity or obstacles you have come across in your own life? Have you seen any adversity in the lives of people around you? Troop leaders discuss what adversity means with your troop and then discuss together what obstacles you have seen in your life and the lives of others. Talk about how you might overcome this adversity and who could help you - just like how Anne Sullivan, **Helen's teacher, helped her.**
5. Set up an obstacle course in another room or outside where your troop **won't** see it prior to the experience (see appendix). Have girls get into pairs. Explain that there is to be absolutely no talking, and one person in each pair is to be blindfolded. Each pair must work together to get through the obstacle course without talking. After everyone has had a try at the course, discuss how they felt not being able to talk and/or see, was it hard to communicate? How did having partners when navigating the course, help? Were they able to work together to complete the obstacle course?

6. You may know Alexander Graham Bell as the inventor of the telephone **but did you know he played a major role in Helen Keller's life? Alexander Graham Bell's mother was almost completely deaf and his grandfather and father had done research on voice, so he took up an interest helping deaf children learn how to speak. When Helen's family started seeking help for Anne, it was Bell that referred them to Anne Sullivan. Very quickly after working with Anne, Helen had a major learning breakthrough and Anne wrote to Bell to tell him about it. Bell then wrote about this in many journals and Helen Keller became sort of a celebrity. They kept in contact for many years and Alexander Graham Bell became sort of a fatherly figure to Helen. Learn more about the impact Alexander Graham Bell had on the deaf and blind community. Discuss with your troop the impact that Alexander Graham Bell and Anne Sullivan had on Helen. Have you ever had someone help you in a big way and make an impact on your life?**
7. A fun fact about Helen Keller is that she met every United States President from Grover Cleveland to Lyndon Johnson; **that's 13 presidents!** What do you think it would be like to meet that many presidents? Lyndon Johnson, the last president she met, awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States. If some day you were to receive that award what would it be for? Do some research on previous recipients of that award and discuss how you can make a difference!

## Take Action

8. After Helen graduated from college she set out to learn more about the world and how she could impact the lives of others. Some causes she cared about included rights and accessibility for the hearing and visually impaired, **women's rights**, supporting the NAACP, and anti-war/violence. What cause do you care about? Look at current issues that are going on in the world today. What can you do to support or

rally with the cause and make social change? Develop an action plan with your troop. Could you write a letter to a government official? Could you hold some type of rally to educate others on your cause? Could you design some type of flyer letting others know how to get involved?

9. People that are visually or hearing impaired want to be treated like everyone else and **don't want to be seen** for their disabilities. Do research about what might be appropriate and inappropriate for you to do or say around someone with disabilities. Learn about small changes you can make to your life to help someone with disabilities feel more included. Below is a link to an interesting blog called Life of a Blind Girl; where she includes some tips on how you can help.

<https://lifeofablindgirl.com/2019/02/13/10-ways-you-can-help-a-blind-or-visually-impaired-person/>

10. Take a deeper dive into sign language. You have no idea the impact you could have on someone who is hearing impaired by being able to communicate with them this way. Learn basic phrases/questions and the responses to them so that if someone that is hearing impaired needed help you could step in.

Appendix:

Obstacle Course Ideas: Set up large cardboard boxes for tunnels, use chairs for roadblocks to step or crawl over, have wagons where one person must ride and the other must pull it through a small course of cones or chairs, have paper bags filled with newspaper and individual sticks of gum where the blind person must find two sticks, one for him/herself and one for the helper, anything where the two must work and problem solve together to attain their goal of the finish



line. You may want to set a time limit depending on the difficulty of your course.