CADETTE ANIMAL HELPERS BADGE – MEETING 2

Badge Purpose: When you've earned this badge, you'll know how animals help humans, and how to help them keep it up.

Activity Plan Length: 1.5 hours

Time	Activity	Materials Needed
10 minutes	Getting Started • Begin the meeting by reciting the Girl Scout Promise + Law.	☐ (Optional) Girl Scout Promise and Law poster
15 minutes	Assistance Animals—What's the Difference? + Snack Chat • Learn about the different assistance animals that help people while having a healthy snack.	☐ Healthy snack
20 minutes	How Can I Be of Assistance? • Explore what goes into training an assistance animal.	None
10 minutes	RoboPet • Learn about robotic alternatives to assistance animals.	☐ Tablet or computer with internet access
25 minutes	Can You Hear Me Now? • Research how animals hear, then create a prototype for a "better" ear.	☐ Various tinkering materials (i.e. cardboard, faux fur scraps, leather scraps, duct tape, wire, etc.) ☐ Scissors ☐ Sound-making device or noise-maker (like a buzzer)
10 minutes	Wrapping Up	☐ (Optional) Make New Friends lyrics poster

Getting Started

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed: (Optional) Girl Scout Promise and Law poster

Welcome everyone to the meeting, recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Activity #1: Assistance Animals—What's the Difference?   Time: 15 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 3 – Know how animals help people emotionally and Step 4 – Check out how animals help people with disabilities
Materials Needed: Healthy snack

1. Call out the different types of assistance animals you can think of (for example, a Seeing Eye dog, horses that help people with autism or who require occupational therapy, cats who visit people in hospitals, etc.). What's the difference between these types of assistance animals? Review the definitions:
    - **Service Animal:** A service animal is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act as any animal who's been individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Some examples include Hearing dogs who help guide people with hearing impairments, animals who alert their owners about oncoming seizures, etc. Service animals are permitted to accompany their handler in most public spaces.
    - **Emotional Support Animal:** An animal that provides therapeutic support to someone with a mental illness. These animals are prescribed by a licensed medical professional who says it's necessary for the individual's mental health.
    - **Therapy Animal:** An animal that's been trained to provide certain people with animal contact. Unlike a service animal that's trained to support one specific individual (like a Seeing Eye dog who's trained to support their handler who has a visual impairment), therapy animals interact with a variety of people when they're on-duty. Examples include dogs and cats who are brought in to provide comfort and care to children in hospitals, people in hospices or nursing homes, etc.
2. While enjoying a healthy snack, discuss:
    - What kind of training do you think each type of assistance animal needs to prepare for their jobs?
    - What qualities do you think an animal needs in order to qualify as an assistance animal?
    - Have you ever thought about training your pet to be a therapy animal?
    - What do you think it is about animals that provides comfort and joy to people?

Activity #2: How Can I Be of Assistance?   Time: 20 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 4 – Check out how animals help people with disabilities
Prep Required:
- Prior to your meeting, arrange to have an assistance animal trainer come to the meeting as a guest speaker.

1. Prepare some questions to ask your guest speaker. Some examples:
    - What kinds of animals do you work with? Are all animals good candidates to be assistance animals? Why or why not?
    - How long does it typically take to train an assistance animal?
    - What kinds of tasks are assistance animals trained to do?
    - What's hard about training animals? What's easy?
2. Thank your speaker for attending your meeting!

Activity #3: RoboPet   Time: 10 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 3 – Know how animals help people emotionally and Step 5 – Look at how animals might help us in the future
Materials Needed: Tablet or computer with internet access

1. Do you have pets at home? How do your pets make you feel? When you have a bad day, or are feeling blue, does being with your pet(s) help you feel better?
2. Studies have shown that being around and petting animals like dogs and cats has a significant impact on our emotional and physical well-being. It lowers our blood pressure, improves our cardiovascular health, and releases calming endorphins—all of which helps us feel calmer, less anxious, and happier.
3. While animals have a positive impact on moods, they're not always allowed everywhere where people might benefit from their company. For example, some people might be allergic to dogs or cats, or live alone and be unable to properly care for a pet. So, how can we still bring these good feelings and benefits to people?
4. Engineers in Japan created Paro, a therapeutic robotic seal, that responds to touch, makes eye contact, and remembers names and faces. Paro is used in places like nursing homes and hospices and allows people to experience the benefit of a therapy animal without the difficulties of animal care.
5. Watch a video of Paro in action: bit.ly/paroroboticseal

Activity #4: Can You Hear Me Now?   Time: 25 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 5 – Look at how animals might help us in the future
Materials Needed: Various tinkering materials (i.e. cardboard, faux fur scraps, leather scraps, duct tape, wire, etc.); scissors; sound-making device or noise-maker (like a buzzer)

1. Have any of you heard of the term "biomimicry"? What do you think it means?
2. Biomimicry is the idea that we can look to nature for solutions to complex human problems. Animals, plants, and microbes are our best engineers. For example, aviation experts observed and studied birds to build planes. Researchers studied how bats use echolocation to find their way in the dark to create a cane for people with visual impairments.
3. Research how the shape of animal ears helps them hear and focus sounds. Have you noticed how dogs perk up their ears when they're trying to listen for something, or how cats swivel their ears in the direction of sound?
4. Then, use the materials provided to create a prototype for a "better" ear that will enable you to hear more clearly.
5. Once you've created your prototype, test it out!
   - Find a quiet location. Put a piece of tape down on the floor in the middle of the room, and mark off measurements in one-foot increments (so, 1 ft., 2 ft., 3 ft., etc.).
   - Everyone should work in pairs to test out their ears.
   - One person (Person A) should stand at one end of the room and hold the sound-making device/noise-maker. The other person (Person B) should put on their blindfold and then stand at the beginning of the tape line, facing Person A.
   - Person A should play the sound while Person B tries to listen for it. If she can hear it, she should take one step back on the line. Person A should keep playing the sound until Person B can no longer hear it.
   - Then, try the experiment again using the ear prototype.
   - How far back did she get with just her ears versus using the prototype?
   - Give everyone a chance to try.

Wrapping Up   Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed: (Optional) Make New Friends song lyrics poster

Close the meeting by singing Make New Friends and doing a friendship circle.

More to Explore

- Field Trip Ideas:
  - Visit an equine center that provides animal assisted therapy to learn about the different ways horses help people with physical and emotional disabilities.
  - Visit a nature center or zoo to explore learn more about the domestication of cats and dogs.

- Speaker Ideas:
  - Ask a dog trainer to come to your meeting and talk about human-canine communication.
  - Invite a police officer or firefighter to talk about how dogs assist them with their jobs.