

Step Up, Stand Up, and Get Involved!



Finding Common
Ground badge

As a Girl Scout Cadette, you probably know how good it feels to use your energy and skills to solve a problem and help others. Maybe your troop has used money from your Girl Scout Cookie sale for a project to help a cause you're passionate about. Or you earned your Finding Common Ground badge and learned how people with different opinions can work together to make a difference.

The best part about making a difference is that you can keep doing it forever. You can lead a movement to find solutions for problems in your neighborhood, town, community, state, and the world—now and throughout your lifetime.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Have you ever heard the slogan **“Think globally, act locally?”** It means that the solutions to global issues can start at home. You may not be able to change environmental laws in another country, for example, but you can help implement environmentally friendly programs at your school.

If you'd like to broaden your scope, the sky's the limit! Think about problems you'd like to tackle at the state, national, or global level.

Need a little help finding your passion? See a list of suggestions in the box on this page.

What Gets You Fired Up?

Passion is personal—everyone needs to find the causes that matter to *them*—but if you need a little push, see if these ideas spark something for you!

- There is bullying going on at my school.*
- The dress codes at my school are stricter for girls than for boys.*
- Landfills in my city are filled with plastic grocery bags and water bottles.*
- There is no place in my town for people to discard their old cell phones and computers.*
- The lunches at my school are high in sugar and don't include fresh produce.*
- There are not enough safe sidewalks or bike paths in my community.*
- The water in the fountains at school and the community center tastes bad or funny.*
- There is a type of wildlife in my state that is now on the endangered species list.*



GET INFORMED

Knowledge is power! Informed citizens know the ins and outs of issues that affect their everyday lives—and how they can work to make changes when they're needed. The first step in becoming a change maker is to find the issue that is your passion.

- ★ **Get to know your neighborhood.** When you see a place every day, you can get so used to it that you don't really see it. For a few days, imagine you're a visitor to your neighborhood, town, or school. Try to notice new details and see if you can find things that need improvement, whether it's kids being bullied at school or parts of your city with no access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ★ **Learn about your state** and find out about some of the problems (drought, homelessness, pollution . . .) it's facing.
- ★ **Find out what groups** or organizations in your community or state are dealing with the problems you see and how you can help.
- ★ **Research your local government officials** and find out what kind of problems they're trying to solve. Team up with a trusted adult and attend a meeting or rally when a local government official comes to your town.
- ★ **Take a tour** of your local government offices and the courthouse; meet your state legislators in Congress so you know who to write to or call.

INSPIRING WOMEN
There are many fearless women who have taken on challenges to make the world a better place. They found a problem they were passionate about and figured out how to make a difference. See one of their stories below.

ESTHER MORRIS
was a mom with three boys living in Wyoming. It was 1870, a time when women stayed at home, did not have jobs, and could not vote. But Esther was different. She became the first female justice of the peace after helping Wyoming become the first territory to give women the right to vote.

Is there a problem in your community that your city council needs to know about? How about getting a petition going with signatures of your neighbors to bring awareness to the problem?

- ★ **Dive in to global issues**—from the health of the world's oceans to barriers to education for girls in developing nations.



GET MOVING

INSPIRING WOMAN

Once you have an issue—or several issues—in mind, it's time to get moving!

- ★ **Share your ideas.** Start speaking to others! It's a great way to spark fresh ideas or build on ones you already have. There may be a group of like-minded local people you can join, whether it's an online group or one who meets in person. (Talk to a parent or guardian before connecting with others, either way!)
- ★ **Run for student government:** use your ideas to form the platform of your campaign. You might also join a student group that advocates for that issue. If your school doesn't have one—start your own!
- ★ **Write a letter to your local government official** (city council, mayor, or state legislator) about something in your community that needs improvement, or see if you can meet with them at their office.
- ★ **Attend a neighborhood city council meeting** with an adult to hear what's happening in your community. Find out what your city council person is doing.
- ★ **Research careers in social entrepreneurship.** Could your ideas and career goals align? Are there volunteer or job-shadowing opportunities that could help you explore the possibilities?
- ★ **Attend neighborhood watch meetings** and find out what safety issues are happening in your area.
- ★ **Volunteer** or do a Take Action project—maybe even your Silver Award.
- ★ **Get help from your troop:**
 - Have your Girl Scout friends help you with an email, social media, or letter-writing campaign.

DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL was the first woman to get a medical degree from an American medical school. It wasn't easy, since medical schools were for men only and very expensive. Dr. Blackwell and her sister, also a doctor, opened a hospital for women and children in New York in 1856.



Silver Award

Is there a local relief group that helps provide medical supplies when there's a fire or natural disaster? Find out what you can do to help in times of need.

- Talk about using some money from your Girl Scout Cookie sale to support a project that will help the cause.
- Ask them to help with a petition, poll, or food or clothing drive.



LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

One voice is great—many voices can become a movement. Amplify your voice and you may be surprised by how far it carries.

- ★ **Spread the word** about your cause by going to your local news media to let them know how you feel.
- ★ **Write a letter** to your city council person to let her know about your work.
- ★ **Take part in a peaceful march or rally** with an adult.
- ★ **Set up a presentation** at a mall or community center to inspire others. Make sure to get permission first!

INSPIRING WOMAN

DOLORES HUERTA
was born in 1930 in New Mexico. She is a labor leader and civil rights activist. She has received many awards for her community service and advocacy work with immigrants and women. She's a Girl Scout, too!

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES

Visit some sites that can help spark ideas for civic engagement.

✓ **National Young Women of Distinction:** If you're looking for inspiration, look no further than your fellow Girl Scouts! The National Young Women of Distinction are Seniors and Ambassadors whose Gold Award projects demonstrated extraordinary leadership, had a measurable and sustainable impact, and addressed a local challenge related to a national and/or global issue. Talk about civic engagement! Find out more at <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/highest-awards/national-young-women-of-distinction.html>.

✓ **PolitiFact:** In today's heated political climate, it can be hard to know what to believe and who is telling the truth. PolitiFact is a non-partisan site that investigates claims from all sides and rates their level of accuracy. Get the latest scoop at <http://www.politifact.com>.

Is there a woman's shelter in your neighborhood that could use some supplies? Maybe you could help organize or join a supply drive, to help out.

