



AMERICAN
HERITAGE
GIRLS™

2013/2014

**Troop Policy and Guidelines
American Heritage Girls (AHG)
Troop CA0480
www.ahgtroop480.org**

**Chartered By: Knights of Columbus
Father Emil J. Kapaun Council #3744**

Program

Key Program Elements

The key elements of the program that are emphasized in program planning for Troop CA0480 are:

- Life skill enhancement through multi-level merit badge program.
- Girl leadership opportunities at all levels of programming.
- Developing teamwork and building confidence through varied outdoor experiences.
- Character development through community service and citizenship programs.
- Social development through organized special events.
- Spiritual development through religious awards program.

Merit Badge Program

The troop budgets for 3-4 merit badges per girl along with a sports pin, service awards, and level awards. Generally, each unit will make plans to complete 3-4 badges per year as a group. Unit leaders help the girls plan their activities to revolve around their badge requirements. The unit leaders may also assign work to be done at home and/or with families. If girls are absent from a troop meeting where badge requirements are being met, it is up to the girl member and/or parent to make sure she fulfills those requirements on her own time if she wants to receive the badge along her with girls in her unit.

Independent work towards merit badges is also encouraged, particularly for the older girls. Summer months are a great opportunity for girls to earn badges in the outdoor skill frontier as well as the other frontiers. All badges earned independently must be approved by the unit leader, advancement manager, a merit badge counselor appointed by our troop, or a merit badge counselor provided at an event such as a day or resident camp. Badges earned above the budgeted amount are \$3.60 each for the badge and shipping cost. Girls will be required to bring a display specific to the badge they earned outside of the troop meeting or make a short presentation to the large group or their unit at a scheduled time. Please set up this time with your unit leader.

Girl Leadership

Girl leadership skills are encouraged at all levels of AHG. Troop CA0480 will offer many leadership opportunities throughout the year for all levels.

Outdoor Experiences

Providing outdoor experiences to our troop members is very important. Our troop will sponsor or provide several opportunities annually for the girls. This may include camping or other overnight activities. For the younger girls, this will be family camping in compliance with the requirements of AHG. Where there are no conflicts with AHG policies and procedures, the troop will follow

the *Age-appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities* and the *Guide to Safe Scouting* published by Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

Community Service Projects

Service is a key part of the AHG programming. Each troop is asked to participate in at least three service projects a year. Units may do additional projects if there is interest from the girls. Girls earn service stars based on the number of service hours they log. The unit leader will log all service projects completed at the troop level. Girls may earn additional service hours outside of the troop setting. Outside hours are submitted to their unit leader for approval and logging. Each girl will be supplied a Service Hour Talley Sheet at the beginning of the year to log personal hours of service. Unused service hours may be carried over from year to year until used. For those older girls participating in long hour mission trips, please consult with your unit leader as to what can be counted on a mission trip prior to submitting those hours. Only hours serving may be counted. Preparation time and planning time may not be counted. Please see the *American Heritage Girl Handbook* on guidelines for service.

Social Development

Social activities for girls are an integral and important part of AHG. The troop offers several social activities for girls and their families. It is important that girls try and attend 2 events per year in order to earn their level award at the end of their level.

Religious Awards

Girls at all levels are encouraged to earn their religious award. AHG offers the following programs:

- Catholic awards program (including the Marian Award) through the local Archdiocese of Los Angeles
- Churches of Christ awards program through Members of Churches of Christ for Scouting (MCCS)
- Protestant God and Country awards program through Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY)

Note that religious awards are an activity of your church. Expenses for booklets and awards are not paid by the troop and are incurred individually or by your church. Please see the troop website or ask your leader for further information.

Awards

Joining Award

All new members earn the Joining Award in the first few months as a new member. If the unit is new, the leader can work with all girls during troop meetings to fulfill the requirements. However, if the unit has already completed their joining award and new members join mid-year or the following year, it is up to the parents to make sure that all requirements are met. Parents

should work alongside the unit leader to make sure all requirements are complete. It is strongly encouraged that all new members earn their Joining Award within 3 months of joining. Girls are recognized either at the next awards ceremony or can be recognized during a troop meeting flag ceremony. New members will need to complete the Joining Award section in the *American Heritage Girl Handbook* and have the unit leader sign off on the requirements before the Joining Award may be presented. Please consult with your unit leader as to the procedure for this first award. All girls must present themselves in the official uniform to receive the Joining Award. For more information about the AHG girl uniform, please review the girl uniform section below.

Level Awards

Level awards are available at all levels of AHG. It is highly recommended that each girl earn her level award. By fulfilling her level award, she will have received the full AHG program. Girls earn this award at the end of their level (i.e. Pathfinder, Tenderheart, 3rd grade, Explorer, 6th grade, Pioneer, 8th grade and Patriot, 10th grade). If girls join at the end of a level and would like to earn their award, it will require parent help to accomplish. Please consult with your unit leader before beginning a level award. All girls earning their level awards (except for Eliza Shirley) must participate in a board of review once all requirements have been met. The board of review will be provided by the troop in the last year of a girl's level. Once the girl has participated in her board of review and she has been approved to receive her level award, she will receive this recognition at the May awards ceremony.

Board of Review

Each girl member completing her level award (except for Eliza Shirley) must participate in a board of review prior to the May awards ceremony. The board of review is an opportunity to review each girl's acceptance of AHG ideals and accomplishments within the troop before they move onto the next level. The advancement manager forms the board of review from parent and adult volunteers. Typically the board of review will meet in late April and early May. The board of review will be offered during a regular troop meeting and girls will be notified prior to the meeting of her required attendance. Girls must be dressed in full uniform (including neckerchief) with badges and insignia, complete for inspection. Girls should wear the official AHG uniform appropriate to her level.

Uniforms

Uniform Code

The AHG uniform is to be worn to all meetings and ceremonies. It can be worn to service projects, fundraising activities, and troop activities that do not require more casual dress. While the girls are in uniform they are to be very conscious of the fact that they are representing AHG and the charter organization and making lasting impressions on those around them. Spiritwear can be purchased at the AHG attic or through the AHG online store at www.ahgonline.org. Spiritwear is worn, when appropriate, to AHG events. However, we encourage our girls to show off their troop and spiritwear at anytime outside of uniformed events.

Purchasing Uniforms:

The AHG vest, neckerchief and sash packages are purchased individually at the AHG Attic once the girl has become an official member of AHG. The AHG Attic also carries the official polos for girls and leaders (navy and red) – the official uniform. For placement of the merit badges and insignia please refer to the *American Heritage Girl Handbook*.

Leader Uniforms

Pathfinder Leaders wear the Pathfinder official leader T-shirt and navy blue or khaki bottoms. Tenderheart – Patriot leaders wear the AHG official red or navy polo shirt. New unit leaders will receive the AHG membership pin at the fall awards ceremony. The AHG membership pin is to be worn on the right lapel. Unit leaders also may earn the gem of a leader pin (at the 2, 4, 6, or 8 years of service) and the religious award mentor pin, which may be placed on the AHG official polo as well. See the leader handbook for placement.

The leader uniforms consist of the following items:

Pathfinder	Leader Option 1	Leader Option 2
Pathfinder Leader T-shirt	Navy AHG Adult Polo Shirt	Red AHG Adult Polo Shirt
Navy slacks* or skirt, or Khaki slacks* or skirt	Khaki slacks* or skirt	Khaki slacks* or skirt, or Navy slacks* or skirt
* Slacks should be dress slacks with no pockets on the legs (i.e. not cargo pants)		

Girl Uniform

AHG is a uniformed organization. Each girl must purchase her uniform prior to receiving her Joining Award. Uniforms may be purchased through the troop at time of registration (see Schedule of Fee form) or through the AHG Attic, once the girl has been registered with AHG.

The girl uniforms consist of the following items:

Pathfinder	Tenderheart	Explorer	Pioneer	Patriot
Pathfinder T-shirt	AHG Polo Shirt - White	AHG Polo Shirt - White	AHG Polo Shirt - White	AHG Polo Shirt - Red
Necklace Kit	Navy Neckerchief Red Vest	Red Neckerchief Blue Vest	Blue Sash	Blue Sash
Navy slacks* or AHG Skort, navy	AHG Skort, navy Or navy slacks* Or Navy skirt	AHG Skort, khaki Or khaki slacks* Or khaki skirt	Khaki slacks* or Khaki skirt	Khaki slacks* or Khaki skirt
* Slacks should be dress slacks with no pockets on the legs (i.e. not cargo pants)				

Award Ceremonies

The troop plans three award ceremonies per year so those girls may receive their badges, joining awards, level awards, service recognition, and religious awards. You will receive a calendar in the fall for all dates for the year. The ceremonies typically occur near the end of the last month of the program year trimester (October, January, and June). These award ceremonies are open to parents, family and relatives to attend. It is important to the girls that they have at least one parent in attendance for these award ceremonies. If girls are unable to attend the ceremony, her recognition will be given to her during an opening ceremony at the next available troop meeting.

Meeting and Event Procedures

Health and Safety

First Aid

An adult certified in first-aid and CPR will be present at all activities. The troop has a first-aid kit at all meetings and activities. Each girl's health and medical information will always be readily available at all meetings.

Sick Policy

Your daughter should be free from fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for at least 24 hours and must not have any unknown rash in order to attend any AHG activity. If any medication must be given during an event, the request for administration of medication must be provided to the unit leader or health and safety lead before the event.

Administration of Medication Policy

AHG members are discouraged from taking medication at AHG events unless absolutely necessary. The parent must be present and administer the medication, or the following steps need to be followed:

1. No AHG girl member is allowed to self-medicate while participating in an AHG event. Exceptions include inhalers, which may be kept on a girl's person for emergency use. Parents must indicate in writing that the girl is in possession of this medication and possesses the knowledge and ability to administer.
2. No AHG girl member may bring over the counter medications for self-administration. The Health and Safety Lead may administer over-the-counter medications on an as-need basis. Parents must include these over-the-counter medications on the Request for Medication Administration form. These medications should be in original packaging, placed in a Ziploc baggie, marked with the girl's name and kept in the possession of the Health and Safety Lead for the duration of the event.
3. Administration of all medication will be done per the instructions provided on the Parent Permission form.
4. AHG requires a completed Request for Medication Administration form from the physician that provides the name of the drug, the dose, the times when the medication is to be taken, and the diagnosis or reason the medicine is needed.

Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Policy

Alcohol and illegal drugs are not permitted at any AHG function or activity. Smoking tobacco products is not allowed in the presence of girls at AHG activities or events. Violation of this policy will be addressed as follows:

- Girl members who violate the policy will be reported to their parents.
- Adult violations of the policy will be referred to the charter organization representative, the local AHG council, and/or AHG headquarters for consideration.

Standard Procedures

Code of Conduct

All AHG girl members are expected to properly conduct themselves at all AHG functions. Proper behavior includes respect for themselves and others and adherence to AHG standards as outlined in AHG Creed. Violations will be addressed as follows:

1. First violation: counseling by her unit leader in any change that must take place
2. Second violation: interview with the troop coordinator concerning how the incident does not live up to the AHG creed
3. Third violation: parental notification and possible termination of membership for severe violations at the discretion of the troop board

Release of Troop Members in the Pathfinder, Tenderheart, and Explorer Units

Each parent will need to pick up his or her daughter at the end of a troop meeting. A written note delivered by the parent is required, if a child is to be picked up by another adult (e.g. carpooling, another relative or babysitter picking up your daughter, etc.).

Emergency Transportation of Youth

In the event of an emergency that requires troop Leaders to transport a youth who does not have authorized transportation home, two-deep leadership is required.

Troop Communication

Emergency Numbers – If you have an emergency and need to contact your daughter during a meeting, call the any of the board members or unit leader cell phones listed on the Leader Contacts sheet.

email – This is our primary form of communication. Troop emails will typically sent out the week prior to a meeting. You may receive updates from your unit leader, coordinator, treasurer, and other members of the troop board.

Website – See www.ahgtroop480.org for additional information on Troop CA0480 and its activities.

Flyers – Flyers may be emailed or handed out at troop meetings to keep parents informed of current activities. Most special events have deadlines. Payment and reservation form will be due on a particular due date.

Meeting and Event Cancellation

A troop or unit meeting or event may be canceled by the troop coordinator due to inclement weather, unhealthful air quality, or absence of 50% of its members due to illness. If a meeting or event is canceled all unit leaders will be notified by telephone and/or email. Unit leaders will then notify all of their unit members of the cancellation by telephone and/or email. The unit leader may cancel a unit meeting or event for the same reasons and will notify the troop coordinator and unit members of such cancellation. If both unit leader and the assistant unit leader are unable to attend a meeting and no adult volunteers are able to assist, that unit may also be canceled or rescheduled for another date and time.

Girl Visitors

From time to time, girls may like to invite a friend to visit a troop meeting or a Bring a Friend activity. The following procedure must be followed when inviting a guest(s):

1. Notify the troop coordinator and unit leader in advance (preferably one week) to ensure adequate supplies and snacks.
2. Their parent must accompany the child and remain with the child during the troop meeting or activity.
3. If a parent is unable to attend, a permission slip and medical form should be submitted in case of medical emergency.

All other visitation situations must be communicated with the troop coordinator in advance.

Sibling Policy

AHG troop leadership recognizes the fact that parents may sometimes need to bring children who are not AHG participants to troop meetings and events. This is permissible provided the following rules are strictly adhered to:

1. Children must remain at their parent's side, or at the side of an adult designated by the child's parent, at all times during the meeting or activity. Children must never be unattended.
2. Children may not be unsupervised in the hallways at any time.
3. Siblings may not participate in AHG activities, as this may create logistical problems for those organizing the meetings, and it may cause distractions.
4. Parents are to remove disruptive children.
5. Any leader taking an active role in a meeting is to make arrangements with another adult to supervise her non-AHG children.

Troop Trips

Permission Slips

When girls will be participating in a field trip or activity that requires transportation outside of the troop meeting, they must have a permission slip unless the parent is attending and driving. Troop leaders are not authorized to take children without a permission slip. Permission slips are emailed out and/or available on the troop website.

Forms

A Troop Trip Verification form must be completed for all troop/unit/squad trips that exceeds 75 or more miles. The charter organization and the National/Council office must approve all Trips at least four weeks prior to the activity. All camping trips require the Troop Trip Verification form regardless on distance. Any high adventure activity (horseback riding, rappelling, canoeing, etc) must have charter organization representative approval prior to the activity and an AHG High Adventure Activity form must be completed and sent to the National/Council Office for approval at least three weeks prior to the activity.

Girls participating in a high adventure activity (i.e. horseback riding, canoeing, rappelling etc.) must complete the High Adventure Health and Medical form, which includes a doctor's signature. These must be provided before leaving for the activity. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that this information is provided. See your unit leader for the necessary forms if you did not receive a form. This form can be completed prior to the beginning of the program year and is good for one year from the date of issue.

Transportation for Troop Activities

All potential drivers for troop activities must complete a Troop Transport form, verifying auto insurance, seatbelts and driver's license. This form must be on file with the troop coordinator and the unit leader, in charge of the activity. These forms are available for completion at the parents registration night in your girl registration packet. Parents choosing not to complete this form may not transport girls other than their own daughter on a troop related activity. This form must be updated annually.

AHG requires drivers to adhere to the following requirements for public liability insurance on vehicles used to transport members for troop/unit/squad related activities or on long distance trips. Drivers must maintain the maximum of the following coverage and the coverage required by the state of California.

Vehicle Type	Personal Liability Each Person	Personal Liability Each Accident	Liability Property Damage
Passenger Cars, Station Wagons	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$50,000
Passenger Bus	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$50,000

It is AHG policy that if an adult driver has any of the following violations in the last three years, they may not transport girl or adult members on any troop activity:

- Driving under the influence
- Reckless operation
- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Two or more moving violations within the last 12 months
- Three or more moving violations within the last 3 years.

Appropriate leader-to-girl ratios and two-deep leadership should be present during transportation. All drivers must be licensed and at least 21 years of age. The AHG troop board and leadership reserves the right to deny a driver based on automobile safety or driving record. The motor vehicle record of any driver may be randomly checked.

When a unit/squad of the troop travels for an activity of the troop, each car will be provided with a troop trip packet, directions, maps, and contact information. Each vehicle traveling more than 75 miles should have a first-aid kit.

Parent Responsibilities

Parent Participation

Meetings and Events

One purpose of AHG is to provide opportunities to bring the family together. Parent involvement is highly encouraged and for the youngest ages required. Parents are expected to take turns providing snacks, crafts, and/or materials for badge work for their daughters unit. Parents are also urged to offer their skills in leading merit badge work in areas in which they have talents. The specific needs of the troop are listed below for each unit.

Unit	Parent Participation	Revolving Responsibilities
Pathfinder	Required	Participation with daughter, snacks and crafts
Tenderheart	Encouraged, especially for first grade	Snacks, crafts, and merit badges Participation with first grade daughter encouraged Attendance with second/third grade daughter encouraged
Explorer	Encouraged	Snacks, crafts, and merit badges
Pioneer Patriot	For Specific Responsibilities	Snacks, crafts, and merit badges

For the younger girls, the parents are asked to help the girls get to the meetings and events in the required uniform before the starting time and after a visit to the bathroom. Parents also need to monitor emails and make sure the girls remember to bring their Handbooks or other necessary information to each meeting.

Adult Volunteer Positions

Your participation is vital to our success. Please consider serving as a member of the troop board, as a unit leader, or as a merit badge counselor. AHG Troop CA0480 thanks you for helping enhance the lives of these young girls through your participation. Volunteer positions are listed below in the troop structure section. Dads are especially encouraged to volunteer for support roles on the board and as merit badge counselors in areas of their talents.

Positive Communication

Positive communication avoids gossip by providing constructive feedback and uses the conflict resolution principle. To this end, Troop CA0480 has a suggestion policy and a conflict resolution policy as described below.

Suggestion Policy

Your suggestions should be submitted by email with the situation described, the problem defined, and your idea for a solution. Suggestions may be submitted to your unit leader or to a troop board member. All complaints are to be submitted as suggestions, where the complaint is the problem that is defined. Thinking through the problem and coming up with a possible solution allows criticism to be constructive.

The troop board will consider your suggestion and implement the changes if deemed beneficial to the entire program.

Conflict Resolution Policy

The conflict resolution policy is derived from Matthew 18. The basic steps are listed below and the process stops when the conflict is resolved.

1. Go to the person with whom you have conflict and try to work it out with positive communication.
2. Bring the issue to the troop board for resolution.
3. Bring the issue to the charter organization for final resolution.

A longer process is provided in the troop coordinators handbook and will be used in cases of difficult problems coming to the troop board.

Finances

Troop Finances

Current Year Budget

Participants	Number	
Pathfinders	2	
Tenderhearts	8	
Explorers	6	
Pioneers/Patriots	10	New Adults
Adults	17	0
Expense (1)	Per person	Total
Registration Fees	\$26.00	\$1,118.00
Badges	\$24.00	\$576.00
Pathfinder Patches	\$7.00	\$14.00
Program Support Fee	\$20.00	\$520.00
AHG Charter Fee		\$325.00
Leader Recognition/Pins	\$0.00	\$0.00
AHG Flag/Banner (2)		\$0.00
Supplies and Crafts (3)		\$0.00
Snacks (3)		\$0.00
Web site costs		\$9.00
Meeting Rooms	0	\$50.00
Admin and Shipping		\$70.00
Total Expense		\$2,682.00
Income	Per person	Total
Pathfinder Dues	\$60.00	\$120.00
Regular Dues	\$80.00	\$1,920.00
Adult Dues	\$26.00	\$442.00
Charter Org Payments		\$200.00
Meeting Rooms		\$0.00
Total Income		\$2,682.00
Margin		\$0.00
NOTES:		
1. Outdoor activities, special events, service projects, and troop trips are budgeted separately on a break even basis.		
2. AHG Flag/Banner not budgeted		
3. Supplies, crafts, and snacks supplied by families on a rotating basis		
4. Handbooks and uniforms are not included in dues		

Charter Organization Costs

The charter organization may contribute to the troop operations fund for expenses such as the charter fee.

Fundraising Policy

For many living in the coastal Los Angeles area, time is at a higher premium than money. To best encourage positive programming for girls and quality time with parents and families, Troop CA0480 plans to finance itself through dues and financial support from its charter organization. Fundraising may become an issue should a council be formed in the Los Angeles area. It is the position of the troop board that any council fundraising requirements provide an alternative dues amount.

Donations

Donations to the troop are welcome, but are not tax deductible. Donations to the charter organization are tax deductible.

Scholarship Money

Scholarship money may be available for the expenses of joining (dues, uniforms, and books) and participating in the troop (event charges and camperships) depending on the level of hardship. Please discuss with a member of the troop board.

National/Council Finances

Providing For the Promise

Please consider adding AHG to your charitable donations budget for the *Providing for the Promise* (PFP) annual family donation campaign to help the ministry of AHG.

AHG is a member-supported ministry. The PFP donation campaign runs from January 1st through March 30th. The goal of this campaign is to provide donations to support the development of local councils and to cover the development costs of uniforms, insignia, handbooks and program supports. Troops are provided support services that includes a support team, resource materials, program helps, troop administrative tips such as charter or insurance questions, fundraising development support, conflict resolution and monthly mailings. Your annual contributions greatly benefit the mission of the organization.

Each troop is asked to provide a PFP coordinator to help in communicating the needs of the campaign and encouragement to support the AHG ministry.

National

Troop CA0480 pays \$22 per girl annually for direct service from AHG national headquarters.

Council

Not applicable at this time because Troop CA0480 is a direct service troop and not part of a council. Council dues or fundraising requirements would replace the \$20 per year per girl paid to the AHG national headquarters for direct service and would support regional activities for the local troops.

Troop Structure

Troop Board

AHG Troop CA0480 will have a troop board that will create and implement all troop policy and guidelines. The troop board is accountable to the charter organization through the charter organization representative. The *Troop Policy and Guidelines* book and the annual budget will be revised by the troop board and submitted to unit leaders and parents for review and approval at the annual planning meeting. During troop start-up, the book and budget will be developed by the initial troop board and approved by the charter organization.

The troop board will consist of a minimum of three adult member positions: coordinator, vice-coordinator and treasurer and will meet at least once per trimester. Business may also be conducted via electronic means including email, chat, video conferencing, and teleconferencing when a consensus can be reached.

Other positions on the board may include: secretary, membership development coordinator, uniform manager, providing for the promise campaign coordinator, advancement manager, board of review chair, outdoor experiences coordinator, service project coordinator, social events director, training coordinator, and troop shepherd.

Troop Board and Unit Leader Qualifications

The troop board and charter organization must approve all candidates for troop board and leadership. All candidates must be 21 years old and submit a volunteer application and three references. All troop volunteers must have a background check performed by the charter organization from a reputable company. Troop board and unit leaders positions are a one-year commitment and may continue in the position with troop board and charter organization approval. All Adult Volunteers are expected to model the AHG creed at all times. The troop board and/or the charter organization may remove troop board members and unit leaders.

Units

The troop will be divided into age appropriate units according to the guidelines set forth by AHG. This troop will operate all five levels, if there is interest and leadership in all levels. Those levels are: Pathfinder (K), Tenderheart (1-3), Explorer (4-6), Pioneer (7-8) and Patriot (9-12). Each level will have a registered unit leader. A registered assistant unit leader is recommended. Two-deep leadership is required at all times in addition to compliance with the AHG minimum leader-to-girl ratio:

Unit	Min. Registered Leader to Girl Ratio	Unit Leaders
Pathfinder	1 registered leader per 6 girls	Pathfinder Leader Pathfinder Assistant
Tenderheart	1 registered leader per 6 girls	Tenderheart Leader Tenderheart Assistant
Explorer	1 registered leader per 8 girls	Explorer Leader Explorer Assistant
Pioneer	1 registered leader per 10 girls	Pioneer Leader Pioneer Assistant
Patriot	1 registered leader per 12 girls.	Patriot Leader Patriot Assistant
At Large		Junior Assistant Leader (ages 18-20)

Levels may be broken into squads according to size and the development stages of the girls. It is very typical that the Tenderheart level may be sub-divided into squads based on grade level - i.e. 1st grade, 2nd and 3rd grade. Pioneer and Patriot levels may join together while the girls work on their age appropriate program work, depending on the number of girls in each unit.

Parent Signature Page

Tear off this back page and return to troop coordinator as soon as possible.

I have read, understood and will abide by the rules and policies presented in the AHG Troop CA0480 Parent Handbook.

Parent Signature

Date