Guide for Senior Girl Scouts

Working Together to Make the World a Better Place
Contents

Senior Girl Scout Program Overview.................................................................3
About My New Red Shoes...................................................................................4
The Issue: Clothing for Confidence.................................................................5
A Very Special Gift Bag...................................................................................9
What Can Seniors Do to Help?......................................................................10
Activities by Award/Badge............................................................................11
GIRLtopia Companion Guide.........................................................................13
Real Girls, Real Stories....................................................................................14
Love Letters... ................................................................................................16
Welcome to My New Red Shoes’ Senior Girl Scout program! Together, we can Discover, Connect and Take Action to provide homeless and low-income children with brand new clothing and shoes so they may look and feel confident at school.

With My New Red Shoes, Senior Girl Scouts can:

**Discover**
Learn why school clothing and shoes are important to the confidence and long-term success of disadvantaged children in your community.

**Connect**
Get motivated to help children in need and inspire others in your community to join the movement to give homeless and low-income children confidence at school.

**Take Action**
Create long-term change by collecting shoes, creating personalized back-to-school gift bags, helping My New Red Shoes’ develop our programs and involving younger Girl Scouts… and more!

**Leadership**
Together, Senior Girl Scouts and My New Red Shoes can empower girls and boys in our community to succeed at school and in life... making the world a better place!

How to use this guide
This guide was created especially for you and other Senior Girl Scouts so you can Discover the issues behind My New Red Shoes’ work and then Connect with others and Take Action to help homeless and low-income children arrive at school confident and ready to learn. Consider this a launching pad for ideas about how to incorporate My New Red Shoes into your Girl Scout experience, whether it’s through a Gold Award, Journey or as you earn Legacy Badges and other leadership awards.

If you’re interested in earning your Senior Community Service Bar or Volunteer-in-Training Award, or if you’d simply like to inspire younger Girl Scouts to help My New Red Shoes serve even more children for school, be sure to check out My New Red Shoes’ activity guides for younger girls on the web at www.mynewredshoes.org.

My New Red Shoes’ Girl Scout program is all about giving you the tools to Discover, Connect and Take Action to help homeless and low-income children arrive at school proud and ready to learn. Thank you for joining us on this journey!
About My New Red Shoes

Mission
The mission of My New Red Shoes is to help homeless and low-income children look and feel confident as they start the school year by providing them with new clothing and shoes and by rallying youth and adults around this effort through volunteer and educational opportunities for individuals, families, schools, corporations and community groups.

History
My New Red Shoes was founded in 2006 by a former Girl Scout and now Daisy troop leader who wanted to give disadvantaged children in and around her Menlo Park, California community the opportunity to feel proud of what they were wearing on the first day of school. That first summer, she teamed up with local Girl Scout troops, schools, faith-based groups and service organizations to clothe 354 children for school. In its first five years, My New Red Shoes distributed over 11,000 clothing and shoe gift bags to homeless and low-income children in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Programs
Through its Clothing for Confidence program, My New Red Shoes provides homeless and low-income school-aged children with brand new shoes, a $50 clothing gift card, a little “something special” (such as a clothing accessory or school supply) and a handmade card from a local child all in a hand-sewn gift bag. This personalized gift enables homeless children to face the school year adequately dressed, confident and ready to learn. Each summer, My New Red Shoes distributes these gift bags at volunteer-run, back-to-school parties and through partnerships with homeless shelters and other youth-serving agencies.

My New Red Shoes’ Community Outreach and Education program rallies youth and adults around its mission through volunteer and educational opportunities for individuals, families, schools, corporations, and community groups. My New Red Shoes’ Girl Scout program is part of this initiative.
The Need
For homeless and low-income children, succeeding in school is extra challenging. Consider the following:

- About 1.5 million American children experience homelessness every night,\(^1\) including about 5,500 children in the four Bay Area counties of Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara alone.
- Homeless children are nine times more likely to repeat a grade, four times more likely to drop out of school, and three times more likely to be placed in special education programs than their housed peers.\(^2\)
- Homeless children very often do not have the appropriate clothing and shoes to attend or succeed in school. One study showed that of the homeless children who did not attend school, 21% did not do so because they did not have any or the right school clothing.\(^3\)

As a result, children from homeless and low-income families often attend school day after day in ill-fitting, unseasonable hand-me-down clothing, sometimes the same outfit over and over again.

Fitting in is the first step toward standing out
- Social scientists have proven over and over what we all know to be true: children who are ashamed of their clothing and unable to dress like their peers are less likely to attend school and more likely to withdraw from activities and earn lower grades than those who fit in.\(^4\)
- According to one parent of a child who received a back-to-school gift bag from My New Red Shoes, ill-fitting or otherwise sub-par clothing and shoes make a difference in homeless children’s motivation, attendance and attitudes about school: “It’s hard for them to fit in at school. Not to have a label [on their shoes or clothes] makes them feel like ‘just shelter children.’”

Why My New Red Shoes?
- Without My New Red Shoes, nearly 11,000 children since 2006 would have had to struggle to find and afford appropriate clothing and shoes for school, depending on searching clothing donation closets filled with “periodic donations of used clothing that may or may not be appropriate for the children” in the words of one of My New Red Shoes’ partner homeless shelters. Other children would’ve had to spend what little money their family had on clothing they found at Salvation Army or similar second-hand stores, which can be fun for kids who don’t have to shop at thrift stores, but shameful to children who do.
- By giving them special back-to-school gift bags with clothing gift cards, My New Red Shoes gives children the opportunity to select clothing from a retail store.
that suits their physique and personal style. Instead of a “hand out,” My New Red Shoes gives these children a gift with a personal touch that allows them to feel connected to a strong network of families who care about them in the community while preserving their dignity.

**Simple Gift. Remarkable Results.**
My New Red Shoes receives hundreds of thank you notes and love letters every year telling us what a different new school clothing and shoes made in the lives of the children we serve. Here are a few quotes and thank you notes. For more, check out the attached Real Girls, Real Stories and Love Letters.

- “Thank you so much for giving me shoes so that I can wear them to continue with my dream. I value my education but also value the shoes because I understand that good school shoes can bring me to success. Thanks.” – Juan, 11 years old
- “I really appreciate your kind and wonderful heart. It means a lot to me. Now I can rock my shoes and rock my style!” — Kimberly
- “Thank you for the shoes. I really appreciate what you are doing for this community. It is people like you guys that make a difference to our world. The shoes mean so much to me. Thank you again.” – Cindy, 14 years-old
- According to an employee of one of My New Red Shoes’ partner homeless shelters: “With new shoes and clothing, I see that the kids at the shelter have a renewed sense of confidence for the school year. Rather than dreading going back to school, they were excited to begin learning again. When I asked one of the elementary kids how her first day went, she replied enthusiastically, ‘It was awesome!’ In the time that I have been working at the shelter, I have never heard any child respond with such excitement about school. I feel that the gifts the children received have given them the encouragement and confidence to just be kids and, more importantly, to see themselves as more than just as children living in a shelter.”

**Lasting Change**
My New Red Shoes has a long-term impact on the children it serves in the following ways:
- When children feel good and therefore do well in school, they are more likely to succeed in life and break the cycle of poverty.
- By providing clothing and shoes to families in homeless shelters, My New Red Shoes makes sure that these cash-strapped organizations need not spend their precious resources on outfitting their clients, freeing up their time and money to focus on providing tutoring, counseling, job training and other services that will help these families succeed.
• **Have you ever heard of the butterfly effect?** Even seemingly minor events can make a huge impact. Think about it: My New Red Shoes’ founder Heather Hopkins started My New Red Shoes because of her mother’s experience growing up without suitable school clothing and shoes. Because of her mother’s story, thousands of children have received the gift of school clothing and shoes from My New Red Shoes. Would her mother have known that her difficult experience would have caused positive change in the world? No!

• Children who received gifts from My New Red Shoes have returned years later to “pay it forward” by volunteering packing gifts for other homeless and low-income children. Like Cheryn (a homeless teen who received a back-to-school gift bag from My New Red Shoes in 2010) would tell you, you never know what your good deed might bring about: “My mom always told me if you do something good for someone, Something good will come back to you but twice as good. May God bless your hearts.”

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**NOTES**

1. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
2. Institute for Children and Poverty
3. 2004 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey
Values

- My New Red Shoes believes in the ripple effect that a heartfelt gift can make in the life of a child who is feeling alone in her circumstances, disheartened, or "less than."
- My New Red Shoes has faith in the power of children to change the world; planting the seed of compassion is the first step toward creating community change. Providing the tools to advocate for and generate change is the second.
- My New Red Shoes believes that small acts can make a big difference in the world.

Who We Serve

- Homeless and very low-income school-aged children aged 5 to 18 years (entering grades K through 12) in the San Francisco Bay Area, including San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda and Marin Counties.
- 92% of the children we served in 2011 were homeless and 8% were low-income. The program serves a diverse racial demographic of Asian, African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and multi-racial children.
- In 2011, the Clothing for Confidence program served 3,583 children. Since its founding in 2006, My New Red Shoes has served over 11,000 Bay Area children.

How it Works

My New Red Shoes partners with social service agencies to identify homeless and very low-income youth in need of clothing and shoes. Through these agencies, My New Red Shoes distributes gift bags to the children in their care prior to the beginning of a new school year. Many of the agencies also assist the children in using their gift cards by organizing shopping trips.

“The gifts from My New Red Shoes helped the children know that many people do care about them, that they are important. The new clothes helped the youth feel more confident when returning to school - they were able to fit in. These youth have very little or nothing. The new shoes and getting to shop and make personal choices by using the money wisely gives the youth a sense of control in their lives and pride in ownership.”

— My New Red Shoes Partner Agency
A Very Special Gift Bag

Each child My New Red Shoes serves receives a special, back-to-school gift bag including the contents below. Girl Scouts and other community members all pitch in to make this a gift to remember!

- A brand new pair of shoes
- A clothing gift card so kids can go back-to-school shopping
- A handmade “first day” card wishing the children well on their first day of school.
- A little “something special” like an accessory or school supply to make this an extra-special gift.
- All packaged in a hand-made gift bag sewn by volunteers

Made with Love by ________
Happy First Day of School!

Good luck at school!
What Can Seniors Do to Help?

- **Organize a Shoe Drive**: Let others know why it’s important for all children to have the resources they need to attend school feeling confident. Tap into the resources of your school, church, soccer team, and Girl Scout community to collect shoes for children in need.

- **Sew Gift Bags or Decorate First Day Cards**: Help My New Red Shoes provide a heartfelt gift with the potential of creating a spiral effect in the life of a child. Visit us on the web to learn how!

- **Teach Younger Girl Scouts** about the importance of My New Red Shoes’ work and empower them to Take Action in the community and help a child in need attend school feeling confident and ready to learn. Check out the leveled guides on the Girl Scout page of [www.mynewredshoes.org](http://www.mynewredshoes.org) for fun games and activities for younger girls.

- **It’s Your Story — Tell It!**: Have a lasting impact by inspiring others to support our cause. Lend your “youth voice” to our website by writing entries about your how you Discovered, Connected, and Took Action the Girl Scout way!

- **Make My New Red Shoes’ Stronger**: Help My New Red Shoes create a program with the power to create GIRLtopia. Survey the Girl Scout community to gather testimonials and statistics about their involvement with My New Red Shoes. We will use this information to inspire others to get involved and to make our program even better — serving more children and making the world a better place!

- **Art in Action**: Create a painting, mural, or other work of art portraying the importance of our mission or your experience working with My New Red Shoes and we will display it in our office or warehouse to inspire others to Take Action.

- **Raise Awareness**: Design a creative hand-out, brochure, or flier letting others know why My New Red Shoes’ work is important and then create a plan to spread the word in your community.

- Create a compelling, compassionate **Video or Multi-Media Presentation** showcasing the work of My New Red Shoes and how it creates long-term change in the world.

- **Go, Red and Green!** Represent My New Red Shoes at Girl Scout events and help us reach out to more girls who are interested in giving disadvantaged children confidence at school.

**Other Ideas?** We would love to hear your ideas for Take Action projects. Please contact our Manager of Community Outreach and Education at outreach@mynewredshoes.org or (650) 375-2648.
Activities by Award/Badge

**Award**

**Activities**

**Gold Award:** Refer to the “How Seniors Can Help” page to learn more about potential Gold Award projects.

**Visionary Award:** Download My New Red Shoes’ companion guide to GIRLtopia at www.mynewredshoes.org to learn how you can Journey with My New Red Shoes to help homeless and low-income children start off the school year on the right foot!

**Community Service Bar:** My New Red Shoes depends on volunteers like you! Complete your 20 hours of community service by volunteering in My New Red Shoes’ office or completing a project on the “How Seniors Can Help” page.

**Volunteer-in-Training (VIT):** Mentor a Daisy, Brownie, Junior or Cadette troop using My New Red Shoes’ customized activities for each level. Or, Create and implement a My New Red Shoes program based on a Journey or badge that lasts over four sessions.

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**For More Information...**

...on the opportunities above or on the following page, please contact My New Red Shoes’ Manager of Community Outreach and Education at: outreach@mynewredshoes.org or (650) 375-2648.
Silver or Gold Torch Award: Each year, one youth member serves on My New Red Shoes’ Board of Directors, which meets in the evenings every other month. Applications are collected in May of each year. For more information, contact Heather Hopkins, Founder and Board Co-Chair, at heather@mynewredshoes.org

Collage Artist: My New Red Shoes’ would love to display your cubomania, photo, or color-themed (red!) or advocacy collage depicting our work and why it’s important in our office or warehouse!

For More Information...
...on the opportunities above or on the previous page, please contact My New Red Shoes’ Manager of Community Outreach and Education at: outreach@mynewredshoes.org or (650) 375-2648.
Are you planning on embarking on a GIRLtopia Journey? Let My New Red Shoes join you on your adventure as you Create It, Guide It and Change It using My New Red Shoes’ nifty GIRLtopia Companion Guide.

Download the guide from My New Red Shoes’ Seniors page at www.mynewredshoes.org and help homeless and low-income girls start off the school year confident and ready to learn!
Real Girls, Real Stories

Client Stories
These are real pictures and stories of girls My New Red Shoes has helped over the years. Please note that the photos may not correspond with the stories and that the children’s names have been changed for privacy.

Michelle, a 15-year-old girl whose family suffers from substance abuse problems, has been living in a group home since her release from juvenile hall where she was sent for fighting at school. Now Michelle is trying to turn the corner and have a positive high school experience.

Michelle recently decided to try out for the volleyball team. With few clothes that fit (she had outgrown most of them since leaving home), Michelle arrived at volleyball tryouts dressed in her street clothes and a borrowed pair of shorts that were three sizes too big. She was embarrassed and uncomfortable.

The back-to-school clothing Michelle bought with her gift card from My New Red Shoes has allowed her to play volleyball and participate in other school activities with pride and confidence. Most of all, Michelle’s new clothes have helped her imagine a better future for herself.

Elizabeth is the youngest of six children. Last year, Elizabeth’s father got in a car accident. He became disabled and could no longer work. While Elizabeth’s mother still held her job, it was impossible for her to earn enough to support her family, especially because Elizabeth’s father needed help with his daily activities due to the accident.

Eventually, Elizabeth’s mother could no longer pay for their home and Elizabeth’s family had to move into a homeless shelter. As the first day of school approached, Elizabeth worried that her hand-me-down clothes (which had been passed down through five brothers and sisters before her) would make her stick out from the other children in her first grade class. Then Elizabeth received a back-to-school gift bag from My New Red Shoes with her first-ever pair of brand new shoes. She thought, “Shoes with laces; I really am a big girl now!” She used her Old Navy gift card to buy a brand new uniform so that she could feel as bright and new as the other children in her class.
Twelve-year-old **Veronica** became homeless when her family could no longer afford their rising rent. The quintessential middle child, Veronica focused on making sure everyone else was okay when she and her three siblings relocated to the homeless shelter. She never complained about wearing her big sister’s hand-me-downs or spending her days after school babysitting her little sister. In fact, Veronica rarely drew any attention to herself.

The day Veronica received her gift card from My New Red Shoes, she bubbled with excitement and immediately requested that her mother take her shopping. “Let’s do something fun for **me**,” she said.

When Veronica returned to the homeless shelter after her back-to-school shopping spree, this once quiet and reserved girl gave the shelter staff a fashion show. She was so proud of what she had chosen to wear for her first day of junior high. “It was obvious that the new clothing made Veronica feel like **she** mattered,” according to one staff member. “When Veronica headed out the door later that week wearing her new outfit, her spirits were high, and she felt that no one mattered more than her.”

Twelve-year-old **Natalie** is living at a Santa Clara shelter for teens. Raised by her grandparents due to the incarceration of her mother and father, Natalie has a long record of arrests for petty theft and drug use. Since Natalie has been at the shelter, she’s been drug and alcohol free, but her case manager has noticed that Natalie’s adult-sized problems make it difficult for Natalie to feel and act like the child she is. Natalie’s behavior has changed dramatically since she went back-to-school shopping with My New Red Shoes’ clothing gift card. As her case manager watched Natalie choose and try on clothing that day, he was amazed to observe age-appropriate behavior from Natalie for the first time. This simple gift has freed Natalie to be twelve again as she started school this fall.
Every year, My New Red Shoes receives thousands of thank you letters from the children who received back-to-school gift bags and shoes. Here are just a few.

Thank you so much for the Old Navy gift card. It was very kind and thoughtful of you. My clothes money did not come yet so you really saved my life. I got 3 shirts they are all very pretty. My mom always told me if you do something good for someone, something good will come back to you but twice as good. May God bless your hearts. My three shirts I will wear it to school.

Love
Cherlyn Javier
To: New red shoes program

Thank you very very much for your gift card other wise I won’t be able to buy new cloths for my two daughters. Since we came here I’ve never bought new clothes for my kids all myself. I am thankful to you.

Yee Yin Chew

Dear my new red shoes thank you for a red new pair shoes and the gift card I will use it happily and I promise i will do good in school thank you.

Rong Wei Wu

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to wear new clothes to school. Now I finally can go to school with clothes that are mine. Thank you!!

Best Wishes,
Victoria

I’m happy with my new clothes and shoes!

From

Hey! Thanks so much for the clothes, the opportunity to go shopping at Old Navy was great and lot of fun. I got cool shoes a warm jacket for San Francisco weather and a vintage t-shirt. Now it’s easier for me to look forward to the school year knowing I have all my essentials. Thanks again. XOXO Tierney

Dear My New Red Shoes,

Thank you so much for being able to donate what we need the most during our time of desperate need. My family and I truly appreciate what generous people such as yourself can do for us. Once again our deepest gratitude.

Sincerely,
Valdez Family
Dear My New Red Shoes,

It all started when we hopped into the van, just like Christmas, we received a gift in a stocking. We all rushed to open it up to find colored pencils & a gift card to Old Navy, GAP, & Banana Republic. We were so happy. We hopped all the way to Valley Fair Mall & all of us scrambled out of the van into the stores. We were going crazy, we had no clue where to begin & what to get. We all split up searching for the right things that would suit us. And finally, we found it. All of us with glee left the malls happily with either shoes, jeans, boxers, socks, shirts, & all sorts of other items. We were all so thankful of the gift cards that we each wrote a thank you note. Thank you so much...

Love,

T & D
first of all I must say thank you because I am totally pleased with my new shoes. I saw these pair of shoes 2 weeks ago at Foot Locker. I loved them because the comfortness gives me the feeling that the shoes are weight less, and that boost my skills in basketball and tennis. The $50 gift card that I got, I used it to buy a jacket that cost $45.99. I love that jacket just as much. I'm sure that wearing these to school will surely make me have a happy day and boost my grades.

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