

## The Girls Scout are Coming! By Dr. Maria Richman

Thanks to the NJSOP, The Favreau Foundation, The Girl Scouts, and a dream of an NJSOP Paraoptometric, our office has been able educate our patients and the community about the new Vision Awareness Program. We hung up flyers about the program at our front desk, posted it on our website and also visited the local Girl Scout Leaders meeting at our Intermediate School. We have a large pediatric practice, so whenever a young girl accompanies her parents for an eye exam we ask if she is a Girl Scout, another way of breaking the ice and discussing this fun, exciting and FREE program.

It's taken us a month of promoting the program and now we have troops scheduling visits. We now have a separate appointment book just for Girl Scout troop visits. When the office staff gets a call, they are able to schedule these visits and gather important information such as the age of the girls, the number of girls attending, and the troop leader's contact information.

Our first Girl Scout visit was in April. The visit was scheduled on a weekday and conveniently after school as well as after hours in our office. To be a part of this community service, the doctors and the staff gladly stayed late to greet the troop. First, we reviewed the Vision Awareness Program and discussed the items to address so the badge requirements would be covered by the end of the visit. The two areas this troop was interested in was discussing 20/20 vision and learning more about Camp Marcella /Visually Impaired students. (You can find out about the badge requirements at: <https://goo.gl/PCBHor>)

Next we walked the troop by the front desk and introduced our paraoptometric staff who greet patients when they come in, answer phone calls, check the patients out after the exam, and schedule their next visit.

We then showed them our pre-test room and entered the exam room. We engaged the girls by having them sit in the exam chair as a patient and stand by the instruments as the doctor. They clicked on the remote control acuity projector and dialed in myopic and hyperopic prescriptions on the phoropter. At that point we explained myopia and hyperopia and then addressed glasses or contacts. We allowed them to open a trial contact lens and let them touch and feel them, stressing the importance of washing your hands before handling contact lenses. We also turned on the slit lamp to explain how we can evaluate the health of the eye with a contact lens on it as well as check for glaucoma and cataracts. We then opened up our electronic medical records, showing them the file of the Girl Scout Leader in attendance who gave us permission to share her information.

In our next room, we showed a picture of a normal fundus photo, and then the same leader previously mentioned asked for her photo to be taken. The girls acted as doctors and we involved them in focusing the picture and actually taking the photo.

We spoke about eye conditions that can cause Visual Impairment. A hands-on session using the CCTV and electronic magnifiers allowed the girls to experience how easy and similar a Visually Impaired child can see and read the same as other students. We discussed how the Visually Impaired students could enjoy summer camp at an adaptive prepared facility like Camp Marcella.

We wrapped up the tour by having the girls see the Barbie Eye Doctors. We asked them to talk about what Eye Doctor Barbie is doing. They were able to identify the EMR, CL drawer, phoropter, glasses, and a retinal photo. As if it was not exciting enough to play with the Barbies, we then handed out goodie bags. In the bags were an eye exam coloring book with crayons, pediatric mydriatic glasses, cookies and the Girl Scout fun patch.

On their way out they stopped by the optical area and they tried on a lot of PINK frames. We also spoke about the importance of rec specs and sunglasses. Then a quick photo shoot was done and that concluded our first troop visit!