



Get into.... “Sign up in September!”

The ‘Girls Guiding the Way’ project theme for September is “Sign Up”.

In 1891 over 30,000 Victorian women signed a ‘Monster Petition’ calling for women’s right to vote. The signatures were collected by a handful of very dedicated women from the Victorian Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the Victorian Women’s Suffrage Society who went door to door all over Victoria and collected the 30,00 signatures in only 6 weeks!

In September 1891 the petition was presented to the Premier of Victoria, James Munro. The petition sought that ‘Women should Vote on Equal terms with Men’. Although women were not granted the right to Vote in Victorian elections until 1908, the Monster Petition is seen as instrumental in raising the profile of the women’s suffrage movement.

Why is it called the ‘Monster Petition’?

Its tremendous length earned it the name of the ‘Monster Petition’.

The original petition is approximately 260 metres long and 200mm wide and is made of paper pasted to cotton or linen fabric backing, rolled onto a cardboard spindle which rests on a Perspex stand. It takes three people three hours to unroll the petition from one spool to another – a slow and careful process. Several attendants were required to carry it into Parliament where it was tabled in September 1891.

In September 2008 you can show your support of Girls Guiding the Way by signing the ‘Promise Petition’. Each District will be provided with a calico square. We ask that you decorate the square by writing the name of your District and sewing on a District badge (where one exists). Please then place the square in a sensible place in your meeting area and ensure that throughout September **every member** of Guiding in your District signs the square. At the end of September all the squares will be collected and sewn together to create a giant quilt. At the top of the quilt will be the Guide Promise. By signing the square your Guides are showing their desire to live by the Guide Promise!

How to share the spirit of “sign up in September” with your Guides

Use September to encourage your Guides that they have the power to make change in the world.

♣ **Inspire them with the stories of:**

- the Crystal Palace Girl Scouts (**Get It!** p7)
- the Suffragists (**Get It!** p6)
- the Guides International Service (**Get It!** p8)

♣ **Look at the facts about life as a woman around the world:**

- Equality (**Get It!** p10)
- Life expectancy (**Get It!** pp 11-12)
- Wages (**Get It!** p13)
- Education (**Get It!** p14)
- Right to vote/stand for government (suffrage) in Australia (**Get It!** pp 15,17,18)
- Right to vote/stand for government (suffrage) around the world (**Get It!** p16)

♣ **Look at women in government:**

- **Get It!** page 18 has stories from 3 current politicians who were once Girl Guides. Read their stories.
- Discover if there are any women representing your local area in Local, State or Federal Government. Use the hints in **Get It!** page 31 and invite your female politicians to visit your Guide meeting or a special local Guide event.

Explore “signing up” and “petitions”:

- ♣ Have a calligraphy night. Ask a parent, friend, Trefoil Guild member to come along and share the skill of calligraphy with your Guides.
- ♣ Have a detective night and play a game where the girls each have to match the handwriting to the Guide.
- ♣ Ask your girls to brainstorm as many things they can write with as possible. Write the same message/word with every item and then have the girls match the writing item to the message it left. Suggestions of items to write with include: chalk, pens, lipstick, lemon juice, stones, mud, charcoal etc.
- ♣ Talk about why you would start a petition. Has anyone every signed one? Is there an issue of concern they'd like to make a petition about? Who would they send it to when it is finished?