

# Access to History



Accessibility Lessons Learned (So Far) at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace





People-first language is meant to emphasize the personhood of someone with a disability rather than defining them by their disability.

Identity-first language recognizes a person's disability as a fundamental part of who they are.

# Disability Impacts **ALL of US**

COMMUNITIES



HEALTH

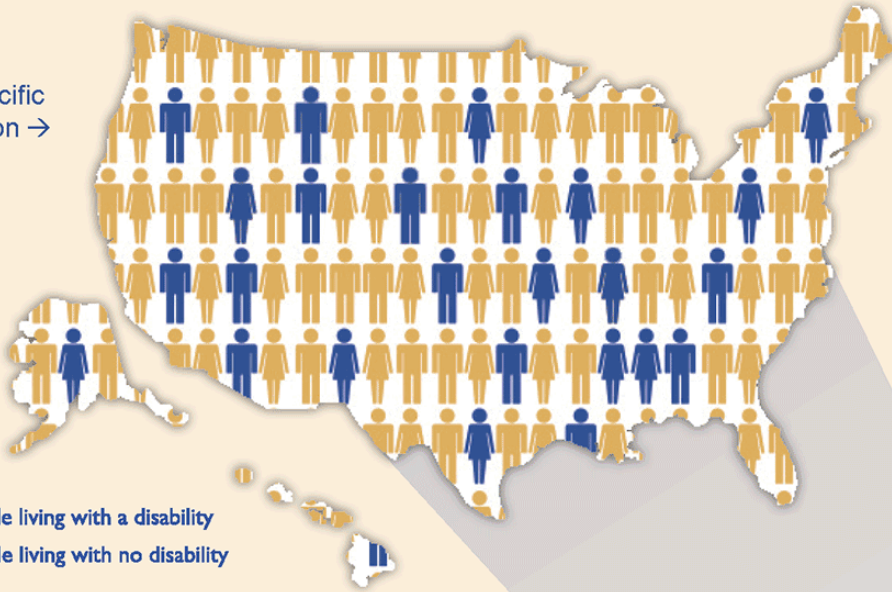




ACCESS



**61 million** adults in the United States live with a disability

Click for  
state-specific  
information →



 People living with a disability  
 People living with no disability

**26%**  
(1 in 4) of adults in  
the United States  
have some type  
of disability

The percentage of people  
living with disabilities is  
highest in the South



1 in 4 adults (61 million) in the United States lives with disability.

2 in 5 people over 65 have a disability.  
By 2040, 25% of Americans will be over 65.

Add family, friends, and companions =  
more than 122 million people affected  
by disability in their everyday lives

The most prevalent disability type  
among American adults is mobility  
limitation.

CDC Graphic and information, 2019



- The most prevalent disabilities among American children are cognitive or brain-based disabilities, like Autism, dyslexia, or developmental disabilities
- 1 in 44 children in the United States has been diagnosed with Autism
- Between 2008 and 2019, the number of disabled children in the U.S. increased from 3.9% to 4.3% (3 million).

US Census Bureau 2019 statistics. Image courtesy of GSUSA. 2019. Girl Scout Leader Bridgette McNeal talks to Girl Scouts in her troop during a field trip to a local bakery. McNeal's troop includes autistic Girl Scouts.











# The Medical Model of Disability

- Human variation is a deviance from the norm.
- Focus on “fixing” the person with a disability.
- The disabled person is the problem, not society.
- A disabled person is a tragic victim to be pitied.

Oil Portrait of Juliette Low, 1919, by Alfred Jonniaux



## Social Model of Disability

- The problem is society, not the individual.
- Inaccessibility is a social justice and human rights issue, not a personal problem.
- Society is responsible for removing barriers.
- It is not the individual's responsibility to "overcome" barriers.
- Society can be planned and organized to eliminate barriers to full inclusion.



Disability activists Judith Heumann and Bradley Lomax, both wheelchair-users, speak at a protest rally in Lafayette Square in Washington DC, 1977. Photograph by HolLynn D'Lil, author of *Becoming Real in 24 Days, One Participant's Story of the 1977 504 Demonstrations for Disability Rights*.





“If design works well for people at the edges of the spectrum of ability, it works better for everyone.”





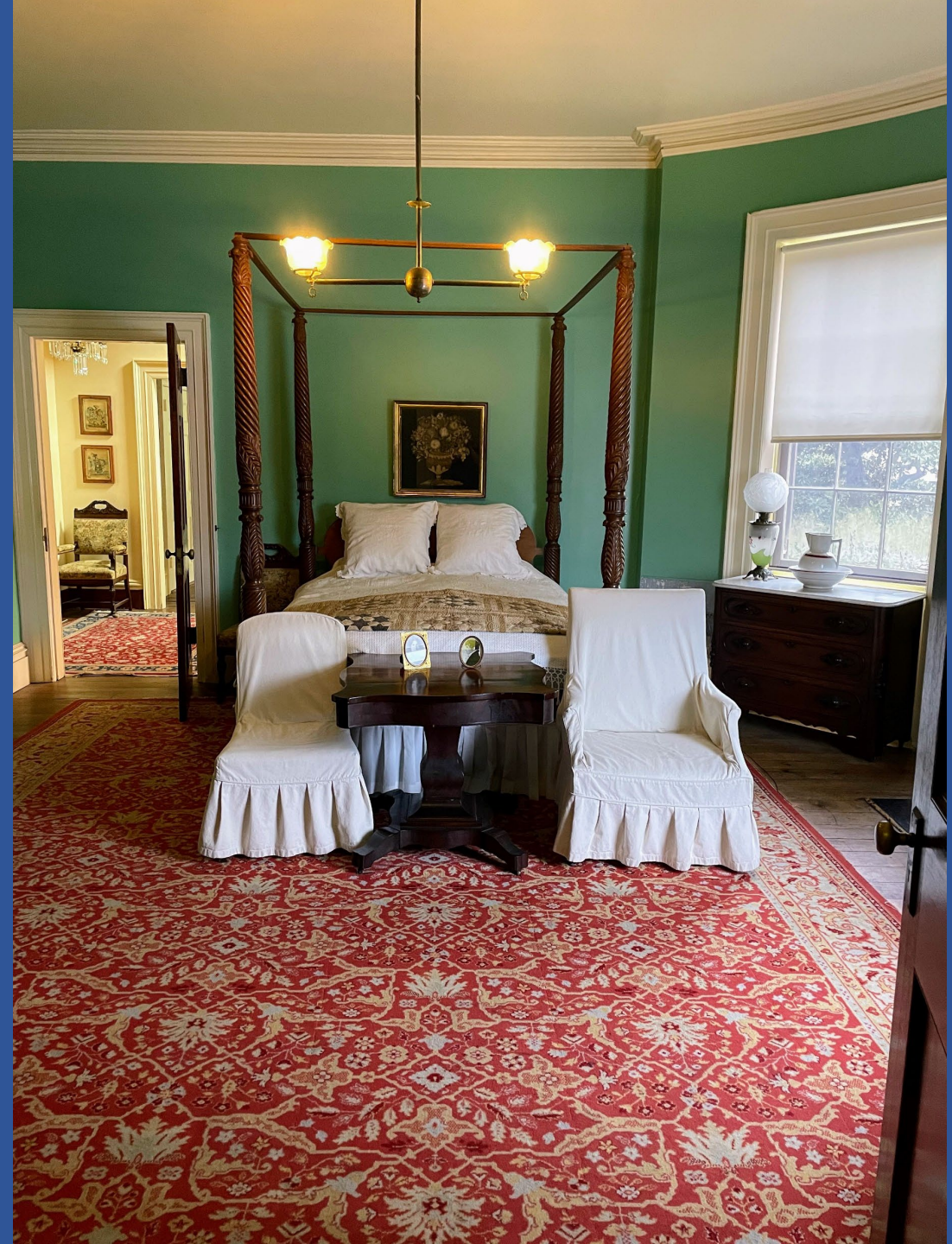


# Physical Inaccessibility Work-arounds

- Portable Exhibits
- History Programs in a Box
- Partner with another organization to use their accessible space
- Virtual Programming (live or pre-recorded)

















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# Accessibility



young girl with guide dog sitting next to Juliette Gordon Low statue of her and dog







English portrait artist Edward Hughes painted newlywed Juliette Low in 1887. Hughes depicted women as fashionably pale, dreamy, and refined.

Juliette wears an elaborate dress of pink figured silk, tightly corseted. Her hand rests languidly in her lap holding a white ostrich-feather fan. She is seated on a stone balcony with a cloudy sky and craggy landscape behind her.

The Hughes portrait was donated to the National Portrait Gallery by Girl Scouts of the USA in 1973. The copy you see here was painted for the museum by Savannah artist Christopher Murphy, who had previously restored the Hughes original.



# Troop Check-in Before



- Loud and confusing
- Standing for 15 minutes
- No shelter
- No water
- No bathrooms



# Troop Check-in After



- Indoors, with things to do
- Bathrooms
- water fountains
- Seating
- Calm environment
- Questions addressed







This picture shows the library.

There are activities to try on the activity tables.

There are books to read.

There is a basket of fidget toys to use on the fireplace bench.

There is a big sculpture made of books over the fireplace!



**Juliette Low was disabled.  
How should we tell that story?**







Do you have disability stories to share from your council and archives?

What can history volunteers do to make disability part of Girl Scout history?

How can you get Girl Scouts involved in making disability part of the Girl Scout story?

Photograph of Judith Heumann as a young Girl Scout in Brooklyn, NY, provided by Judith Heumann to JGLB