

Grace

AT STORMONT

Brownie focus

Last month one of our amazing Brownies, Grace aged 10, attended the launch of our Girls' Attitudes Survey at Stormont. Not only did Grace do an amazing job of chatting to lots of important adults before and after the event, she got up on stage in front of them all and was interviewed about her experiences as a Brownie!

Since then, she has been busy telling lots of other people about her experience at Stormont – we had a chat with her to hear all about it!



Q Where you nervous going to speak at Stormont?

A I was more nervous than I thought I might be because I was speaking to lots of people I hadn't met before. This was my first time at Stormont even though I can see it from my house! As we drove up to the building it looked so big and important, and I started to get butterflies in my tummy! There were lots of important people in the meeting room, but they were very friendly and I enjoyed meeting the Rainbow and Guide who were also being interviewed.

Q There was lots of important people there – who did you talk to?

A Yes I spoke to lots of important people like Naomi Long who told me she used to be in Guides and was a Leader too. If she wasn't busy with her job she said she'd still like to be a Leader. I also met Chris Quinn who is the Children's Commissioner for Northern Ireland, and Debbie our Chief Commissioner. I liked the MLA's because they were all interested to hear from girls in Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers and thought our organisation was very important.

Q Since being at Stormont you've been telling your Brownie friends and school friends about your experience – how has that gone?

A I spoke in school assembly about my visit to Stormont and everything the MLA's said. I told my school what the Rainbow, Guide and Ranger and myself said about how Girlguiding helps us achieve things like cooking, games, going on camp and making friends. Two girls in my school asked me more questions about Brownies and later that week they thought they might like to join too!

Q Has this made you want to do more public speaking?

A Yes, now I feel more confident about speaking in front of others and also talking about issues around the world like climate change and animals becoming endangered. I also would speak up about young children around the world not being able to join clubs like Guides and Scouts. Children everywhere should have the chance to be in clubs or organisations.

A reflection from Grace's Mum...

“My visit to Stormont with Grace was a very memorable day for both of us. It was so encouraging that MLA's and the Children's Commissioner were so positive about what Girlguiding has to offer, particularly as it is run by volunteers.

The survey results highlighted some very positive effects of Girlguiding which is great to hear when mental health issues have increased so much. Some of the issues were more relevant to older girls, but nevertheless it won't be long until Brownies like Grace reach this age and it highlights the benefits Girlguiding will have in the next few years for us!

This was such a valuable experience for Grace, and I'm delighted to see how she has grown in confidence and wants to talk about things that are important to her.”

