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**Immediate Release**  
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### **Girl Scouts of Western New York Surpasses National Average of Gold Awardees**

Buffalo, NY.....Nationally, only 5.4 percent of all age-eligible Girl Scouts—those between 14 and 18 years old—receive the Gold Award, the highest recognition in Girl Scouting. Locally, as of this year, that figure has nearly tripled to 15 percent.

On Sunday June 6, 2011, more than 300 community members joined the Girl Scouts of Western New York in honoring 79 Gold Award winners at a special council-wide ceremony and luncheon held at Salvatore’s Italian Gardens in Depew, N.Y.

Thirteen recipients received additional recognition in the form of one of four scholarships: the Ralph and Mrs. Mary Wilson Scholarship, Girl Scouts of Western New York Education Scholarship, Kim Welsh Memorial Scholarship, and Burgh and Schoenenberger Associates “Golden Opportunity” Scholarship. Buffalo-based automotive expert Lauren Fix, widely known as The Car Coach®, served as the event’s keynote speaker.

This year’s Gold Award projects ranged from raising guide dogs to assist the blind and visually impaired in regaining their sense of adventure and independence to coordinating a child and elderly identification program to provide local authorities with easily-identifiable information when youths and seniors go missing. Some Girl Scouts directed their efforts toward other girls, educating them on many important topics, such as body image, domestic violence, eating disorders, fitness and nutrition, personal finance, and self-injury.

There are a total of seven requirements associated with the Gold Award, all of which promote career exploration, community service, leadership skills, personal growth, and skill development. This involves more than a year of hard work and dedication, including a minimum of 30 hours in a leadership role, 40 hours of career exploration, and 65 hours of work on a service project that will have a long-term impact on the girl’s community.

The Gold Award is recognized as a strong indication of character and community service by college and university admissions offices, fraternal organizations honoring outstanding teenagers, and scholarship grantors. A Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in any of the U.S. military branches. more

The Gold Award was originally established in 1916, as the Golden Eagle of Merit, four years after youth leader Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girls Scouts of the USA. This marked the

beginning of a longstanding tradition of using prestigious awards to acknowledge girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives.

Girl Scouts of Western New York (GSWNY) is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls and young women, serving over 20,000 girls and 9,000 adult volunteers across the GSWNY jurisdiction, including Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming counties. The council's administrative headquarters is located in Buffalo, NY with service centers in Batavia, Jamestown, Lockport, and Rochester.

Founded in Savannah, Georgia, on March 12, 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) strives to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Accordingly, GSUSA continues to be the leading authority on girls, with a membership of more than 3.7 million girls and adults.

For information about joining, volunteering, or making a donation contact 1.888.837.6410 or visit [gswny.org](http://gswny.org) for more.