

**girl scouts**   
of western new york



# The 2025 Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony



Saturday, May 31, 2025  
Salvatore's Restaurant,  
Buffalo

# We Are Girl Scouts



Girl Scouts bring their dreams to life as they work together to build a better world. Through programs from coast to coast, Girl Scouts of all backgrounds and abilities can be unapologetically themselves as they discover their strengths and rise to meet new challenges—whether they want to climb to the top of a tree or the top of their class, lace up their boots for a hike, advocate for climate justice, or make their first best friends. Backed by trusted adult volunteers, mentors, and millions of alums, Girl Scouts lead the way as they find their voices and make changes that affect the issues most important to them.

## About Our Council

Girl Scouts of Western New York currently serves girls and volunteers across nine counties in Western NY: Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming. Adult volunteers conduct a variety of age-appropriate programs and opportunities for girls at the troop and service unit levels. Girls also participate in council-wide projects.

### **Buffalo Service Center**

4433 Genesee Street, Suite 101, Buffalo, NY 14225

### **Jamestown Service Center**

2661 Horton Road, Jamestown, NY 14701

### **Lockport Service Center**

5000 Cambria Road, Lockport, NY 14094

### **Rochester Service Center**

3495 Winton Pl Building C, Suite 2, Rochester, NY 14623

## The Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law

### **Girl Scout Mission**

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

### **Girl Scout Promise**

On my honor, I will try:  
To serve God\* and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*\*Members may substitute for the word  
God in accordance with their own  
spiritual beliefs.*

### **Girl Scout Law**

I will do my best to be  
honest and fair,  
friendly and helpful,  
considerate and caring,  
courageous and strong,  
and responsible for what I  
say and do,  
and to  
respect myself and others,  
respect authority,  
use resources wisely,  
make the world a better place,  
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.



# Letter from CEO

To Our 2025 Gold Award Girl Scouts,

Congratulations on reaching the pinnacle of Girl Scouting - your Gold Award!

Today, we celebrate your courage, creativity, and unwavering commitment to making your community and the world a better place. You have taken on some of the most pressing issues facing our neighborhoods with bold vision and determined hearts, and in doing so, you've inspired all of us, including our future classes of Gold Award Girl Scouts!

Earning the Gold Award is no small feat. It requires identifying a meaningful issue, building a team, creating a sustainable solution, working with your community, and following through with purpose. It's a journey that demands resilience, leadership, and a deep sense of responsibility. And you did it.

As a former Girl Scout and now the CEO of Girl Scouts of Western New York, I am especially proud of every one of you. Your work represents the very best of what Girl Scouts stands for: compassion, courage, confidence, and the power of young people to lead lasting change.

I am honored to have each of you join an elite group! Just six percent of Girl Scouts earn the Gold Award. But your achievement is not just a badge or a title; it's a promise. A promise that wherever you go next - college, the workplace, or continued exploration - you'll carry forward the values and skills that have brought you here today.

You also carry something just as important: the sense of belonging that Girl Scouts fosters. You are part of a sisterhood rooted in shared values and driven by a belief that every girl deserves a place to lead, grow, and thrive. You have the backing of millions of Girl Scouts across the country who are rooting for your success.

As you take the next step on your journey, I encourage you to share your story and help us spread the message of the Girl Scout Difference. Help others see the power of this movement. Support our mission. Volunteer. Share your gifts with the next generation of change makers.

On behalf of the entire Girl Scouts of Western New York family, thank you for your dedication, your leadership, and your willingness to serve others. You are the future we all hope for, and we cannot wait to see where your journey leads to next.

With admiration and pride,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cara Biddlecom".

Cara Biddlecom  
Chief Executive Officer  
Girl Scouts of Western New York

# Scholarships

## Education Scholarship Fund Recipients:

Stella Bauschard, *Rochester*  
Alexis Birkemeier, *Lockport*  
Cyrene Blackley, *Lockport*  
Veronica Bohan, *Boston*  
Elise Brady, *Orchard Park*  
Sarah Burley, *Spencerport*  
Sarah Colelli, *Webster*  
Peyton Crony, *Rochester*  
Grace D'Antonoli, *North Tonawanda*  
Megan Engler, *Clarence*  
Taylor Filarowski, *Lockport*  
Hailey Fisk, *Amherst*  
Ava Fox, *Akron*  
Skylar Fredley, *Penfield*  
Tuolumne Gildea, *Rochester*

Greta Golembiewski, *East Aurora*  
Sabrina HotraTwigger, *Webster*  
Sawyer Hoyt, *Pittsford*  
Emma Kielbasa, *Amherst*  
Anna Leathersich, *Henrietta*  
Sarah Leberman, *Lockport*  
Meaghan Levitsky, *Rochester*  
Jillian Lozo, *East Amherst*  
Charlotte McDonald, *East Aurora*  
Valerie Merlino, *Clarence*  
Lidia Neff, *Orchard Park*  
Alivia Scheible, *Webster*  
Erin Sheridan, *Amherst*  
Riley Stoutenburg, *Fairport*  
Madeline Wilger, *Lockport*

## The Kim Welsh Memorial Scholarship Recipients:

Recipients were not notified prior to the ceremony.  
Carol and Allan Welsh will be “surprising” the recipients  
with the announcement.

## Hans & Charlene Schoenenberger “Golden Opportunity” Scholarship Recipient:

Grace Foster, *Rochester*

## Ralph & Mary McLean Wilson Scholarship Recipients:

Olivia Hunger, *West Seneca*  
Kit Panna, *Tonawanda*

# Scholarship Committee

Rita Babcock  
Lettie Chilson

Adrienne Rothstein-Grace  
Charlene Schoenenberger



## The Meaning of the Gold Award Pin

As in other traditional symbols, gold equals outstanding achievement. The rays emanating from the trefoil represent reaching out to the community, the Girl Scout influence on the wider community, and the interdependence of Girl Scouting in the community.

# Gold Award Ceremony

**Opening Ceremony**

**Welcome**

**Introduction**

**Lunch**

**CEO's Message**

**Girl Scout Moments  
of Reflection**

**Girl Scout Gold Award Introduction  
and Presentation**

**Scholarship Introduction  
and Background**

**Charge**

**Retiring of Colors**

**Closing and End of  
Formal Program**

## Gold Award Girl Scouts

To view full Project details visit [gswnyblog.com](http://gswnyblog.com)



### **Stella Bauschard** *Combating Loneliness in the Elderly*

For my Gold Award, Combatting the Loneliness in the Elderly, I planted a cutting garden at St. John's Living Facility to boost happiness and reduce isolation. I involved a Brownie troop to paint rocks and create a tic-tac-toe board, and added lights, signs, and seating to enhance the space. I led flower bouquet-making classes, with 100% of residents reporting increased happiness and over 90% feeling more social. I also published a research paper on loneliness and plan to host a summer event to celebrate the garden and project completion.



### **Keeley Bell** *Creating Awareness of Visual Learners*

For my Gold Award Project, I created a children's book in Braille. My niece is blind and had limited options at our local library. I placed books in neighborhood libraries and a local school for special needs students. I learned about Braille through an early intervention vision teacher and the Commission for the Blind. My project raises awareness and gives visually impaired children another book to enjoy, while helping sighted readers learn about Braille.



## **Giuliana Bishouty**

### *Healthy Eating and Fitness*

I created a healthy living awareness program and shared it on social media. I researched and interviewed professionals to educate peers about nutrition, exercise, and health risks like obesity, diabetes, and eating disorders. I promoted food tracking apps, simple workouts, and local fitness events. My goal was to help teens build lifelong healthy habits and raise awareness about the importance of early education in preventing unhealthy lifestyles.



## **Cyrene Blackley**

### *Camp Critter Cottages*

For my Girl Scout project, I built owl and bat houses for the four Girl Scout camps in Western New York to help control rodents and mosquitoes naturally. I recognized that pesticides weren't ideal and wanted to attract predators like owls and bats instead. I also led educational sessions to teach Girl Scouts about ecology, predator/prey cycles, and how nature can help solve problems. This project supports healthier camps and offers fun, ongoing learning opportunities for Girl Scouts across the region.



## **Emily Bowers**

### ***The Blessed Mother Garden***

I raised over \$10,000 to restore a damaged garden and install a sustainable water feature at St. Columban's, a historic retirement home. The garden is a source of pride for residents and the community, but had suffered from weather and neglect. My project helped preserve a local landmark, supported St. Columban's mission of quality care, and raised awareness about respecting shared spaces valued by both residents and visitors.



## **Sarah Burley**

### ***Take a Book Leave a Book Library***

I created a little library. It is located at a local church in the town I live in. I collaborated with the Grace United Church of the Nazarene. The purpose of the project was to promote reading in the community. It is located outside the church near many neighborhoods.



## **Sarah Colelli**

### ***Teaching Crocheting to Improve Mental Health***

I improved mental health at Webster Schroeder High School by teaching crochet, collaborating with the Schroeder Social Club, Rotary Club, and school library to host classes and create crochet kits (with instructions and YouTube tutorials). Crochet's proven stress-reducing benefits introduced students and staff to a healthy, relaxing activity important pest control and pollinators with safe roosts.



## **Peyton Crony**

### ***Improving the RCSD Sign Language Curriculum***

The purpose of my project was to better the ASL program in Rochester City schools, as it was outdated and didn't teach the needed information correctly. This impacted Rochester because students will now have a better understanding of the language and Deaf culture. There will also be more people that understand the language and can help close the gap between the Deaf and hearing communities.



## **Grace D'Antonoli** *Mental Health Mural and Brochure*

With the problems going on in the world, awareness for mental health needs to be brought to the forefront instead of being pushed off to the side. Teen mental health has become a crisis in the world and my project focuses on getting rid of the stigma associated with mental health. This project advocates for mental health in my school community. The mural is a constant reminder to students that they can be themselves, aren't alone and there is always hope for a new day. The flyer I created for mental health awareness and assistance is available in Cardinal O'Hara's Counseling Center. The flyer includes links for assistance and a QR code for links to sources for assistance.



## **Anna Day** *Making Nature Accessible*

For my Gold Award, I increased access to nature for children with disabilities by building four raised-bed sensory planters at Daystar Kids, a Rochester daycare for medically fragile children. Each planter was designed at a height compatible with different mobility devices and filled with plants offering sensory experiences through touch, smell, taste, and sight. The planters provide ongoing learning and enrichment opportunities and will be replanted annually as a class activity, benefiting new children each year.



## **Penelope DiFelice**

### *Camp at DASA Preschool*

To address the lack of childcare during February break for preschoolers, I organized a STEAM-based camp at DASA Preschool. I led volunteers, created daily lesson plans, and evaluated activities after each day to improve the program. The comprehensive lesson plan was shared with DASA so the camp can be recreated in the future, ensuring sustainability.



## **Skye Dreher**

### *You are Not Alone: Spreading Strength Through Service.*

For my Gold Award, I addressed youth mental health and suicide prevention in my middle school community. I partnered with the Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) program to lead engaging activities like You Are Not Alone (YANA) bracelets, sidewalk messages, and mental health presentations. I promoted volunteering as a tool to boost well-being and worked with school leaders to reduce stigma and offer coping strategies. As a longtime community volunteer, I've learned that service fosters connection and mental health. This project reflects my identity as a wellness advocate and my commitment to helping others beyond Girl Scouts.



## **Kelly Dykens**

### ***DASA Preschool STEAM Camp***

I organized and ran a week long STEAM-based camp for students ages 3-5 in the City of Rochester. I collaborated with DASA Preschool and solicited donations from Wegmans, Barnes & Noble, and Costco. The purpose of my project was to make STEAM education more widespread and accessible for young children. The project impacted the community by inspiring and educating young minds and the curriculum plans can be used in future years by the Preschool.



## **Megan Engler**

### ***Literacy Kits***

My Gold Award project was creating literacy kits for Westminster Community Charter School where families could check them out of the school and take them home to work on their children's literacy skills. I created a Donors Choose to raise money to get books and other materials donated, I created flashcards with different sight words, put together kits of books, comprehension questions and sight words from the books.



## **Taylor Filarowski**

### ***LGBTQ+ Rights are Human Rights***

For my project I wanted to come up with a fun but informative idea of how to educate those around me of what the LGBTQ+ community has gone through over the years and how it still is affected today. The purpose of this project was to try to make a safer space for everyone to feel like they belong. My project impacted my community by making those part of the LGBTQ community feel welcome and know that they are important as well as always will be accepted as they are human just like the rest of us.



## **Hailey Fisk**

### ***Future Innovators: Girls in Engineering***

For my Gold Award, I organized an engineering event to inspire young girls to explore STEM, since women are underrepresented in the field. I designed hands-on experiments covering five engineering disciplines, from building bridges to creating static electricity and chemical reactions. I partnered with a professional engineer and the Society of Women Engineers and hosted the event at Sweet Home High School. I also launched a YouTube channel to share the experiments and reach more girls. The event received enthusiastic feedback from all participants.



### **Grace Foster** *LGBTQ Resource Center*

For my project, I built an LGBTQ resource center in the counseling department of my school. I contacted and received resources from the Trevor Project and National

Suicide Hotline that I put out for struggling students who may need them. I also compiled a list of the top LGBTQ friendly colleges in the country to put up, and had a bin of free pride flag stickers. The goal of my project was to create a safe space for LGBTQ students who may otherwise be underrepresented in my school, and I hope that after I graduate I'll continue to have an impact on future students who can use the resources I provided.



### **Ava Fox** *Hometown Heroes Memorial*

I created a memorial to honor Fran and Yono Bordonaro, who were like grandparents to me and beloved in our community. Yono served under General

Patton in WWII, and Fran brought joy to many through her kindness. I installed a flagpole, planted Yono's favorite flowers, built a bench with cushions, and added a kindness box for sharing notes. This memorial celebrates their legacy and honors veterans by spreading love, kindness, and community spirit.



## **Natalie Fraser**

### ***Free Little Food Pantry for All***

During COVID, I realized there was a need for access to food in our community at all times. We have many food pantries available, but they are only option certain days of the week at certain times.



## **Skylar Fredley**

### ***Updating Kiosks in Town Parks***

I collaborated with the Town of Penfield to create signage on various wildlife found within different parks in Penfield. I hand painted watercolors of each animal and did research on each to go with the artwork. I wanted my project to educate park-goers on wildlife they may encounter.



## **Tuolumne Gildea**

### ***Increased Awareness of Toxicity of Fish in New York***

I worked to raise awareness about the toxicity of fish in the waterways of New York, caused by decades of pollution. I want people to be able to make informed decisions about what they eat, and I hope that my work helps that happen. My project was focused on making information more accessible on the internet, so I created a website about the issue, and corresponded with the DEC about putting it on their site. I also gave presentations to schools and distributed pamphlets in my hometown of Rochester.



## **Greta Golembiewski**

### *Outdoor Classroom*

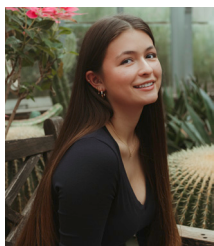
For my Gold Award, I built an outdoor classroom at Wales Primary, the school I attended, to give back to the educators who shaped me. Education is important to me, and I aspire to be a teacher. I fundraised by collecting cans, landscaped with mulch, flowers, and decorations, refurbished a bench for teachers, and made blankets for students to sit on. I wanted to create a peaceful space where students could enjoy nature while continuing to learn outside the classroom.



## **Grace Ham**

### *Camping Skills*

I helped children explore fun and simple ways to enjoy the outdoors, with a focus on camping skills. I ran daily sessions at Camp Windy Meadows, covering topics like outdoor games, Leave No Trace principles, fire and tent building, and outdoor safety. These activities were open to all campers, and the girls were encouraged to use their new skills beyond camp and share them with others in their community to promote outdoor learning and stewardship.



## Sabrina HotraTwigger

### *Cozy Reading Blankets*

For my project “Cozy Reading Blankets,” I partnered with RFMission in Rochester, NY to help those in poverty and facing cold winters. I organized blanket-making sessions, recruited volunteers, and collected donated books and materials. Each blanket was paired with a book and delivered to Rochester Family Mission (RFMission) for distribution. My project aimed to provide warmth, promote literacy, and show care for those in need in my community.



## Sawyer Hoyt

### *Promoting Inclusion and Engagement at Recess*

For my Gold Award, I partnered with Canandaigua Elementary to create more inclusive and structured recess spaces. I painted games and activities on the blacktop to help students engage more easily and feel included. This especially supported those who struggled with unstructured play. I also created resources for recess monitors, including game guides and information on the value of recess, to promote a positive, collaborative environment for all students.



### **Olivia Hunger** *Anxiety Self-Help Digital Tool*

Addressing over 30% of U.S. teens with diagnosed anxiety disorders, this discreet QR-based tool offers self-guided activities. Younger users access book read-alouds and

emotion-mapping, while older teens utilize journaling and breathing techniques. Developed with behavior specialists and social workers, QR cards are distributed in schools and counseling centers, providing anonymous support to help youth identify anxiety causes and develop coping strategies.



### **Aianna Kettavong** *Paper Recycling Program*

While paper recycling is very simple and effective, my school no longer had a paper recycling program that would actually recycle the paper, so I created a paper recycling system at my high school. We distributed old paper boxes to classrooms, and with the help of my amazing physics teacher, Mr. Sicienski, a team of us would collect paper recycling from classrooms and take it to the recycling bin outside. Because of the program, paper is diverged from landfills and recycled into new paper!



## **Samantha Kramer**

### ***Pollinator Boxes***

For my Gold Award project, I helped protect mason bees, essential pollinators in Western New York. I worked with younger

Girl Scout troops and at a local summer camp to teach about pollinators and helped girls build bee hotels to support bee populations. These hotels give mason bees a safe place to lay eggs, helping our crops and environment thrive. By educating others on the importance of pollinators, I inspired action to protect our food sources and environment in a hands-on, lasting way.



## **Anna Kuefus**

### ***Starpoint GSA Club***

My gold award project was starting a GSA club at my high school, Starpoint. A GSA club is a Gender and Sexuality Alliance club formerly known as a Gay Straight alliance club. It is a place for anyone who feels they need a safe place to both be open and have fun. It provides a place to meet those who may be like you or support you. Starpoint High School seemed to me and my friends to be the only one in the area without a GSA club, when I went to my first pride parade I was shocked to see all these schools represented but not mine. With the help of Mrs Naylor, an amazing music teacher I was able to find the support I needed to make the Starpoint GSA club a reality.



## **Catherine Lesh**

### ***Growing Native***

My Gold Award project aims to address the issue of decreasing biodiversity in the U.S. by encouraging Erie County residents to grow native plants rather than exotic ones. I created a website which includes an explanation of the benefits of native plants, information on twenty native species, a glossary of terms, and a list of Erie County garden centers with their addresses. The Erie County community will gain the knowledge necessary to grow native plants at home and begin building a healthier local environment.



## **Meaghan Levitsky**

### ***Jewish Sunday School Programming Initiative***

For my Gold Award project, I created nearly two dozen engaging, Jewish-themed lesson plans, like escape rooms and scavenger hunts for the programming department at Temple B'rith Kodesh. As the only consistent teen programmer and with my graduation approaching, I wanted to ensure the department's future success. I compiled a binder of activities to help future teens lead fun, meaningful lessons. My project ensures students continue to enjoy learning about their Jewish heritage in a creative, interactive way.



## Lillian Lewinski

### *Community Resource Boxes*

My project was building community resource boxes in communities where senior citizens who are not able to drive or have access to the internet can have the resources they need. I built them in communities in Clarence, Lancaster, Akron, and Alden. This project impacted my communities by providing support for the senior citizens that needed it the most.



## Sophie Lilley

### *Calm Quest*

For my Gold Award, I wrote a children's book titled *Calm Quest: Asha's Story*. It follows a girl who learns to manage anxiety with help from loved ones and strategies like breathing, journaling, and positive self-talk. I included a resource section with kid-friendly explanations of these techniques. To ensure accessibility, I placed copies in Little Free Libraries around my community, including the one I built for my Silver Award.



## **Jillian Lozo**

### ***Creating a Sustainable Garden and Military Memorial Sculptures***

For my Gold Award project, I created a sustainable perennial garden and military memorial with sculptures at the A.J. Jurek American Legion Post. I worked with their Board of Directors to honor veterans and enhance the space for members and community events. The upgrades made the area more welcoming and patriotic, reflecting our pride and appreciation for those who served. I received great feedback from veterans, members, and the community for creating a lasting and meaningful tribute.



## **Phoebe Martin**

### ***Phoebe's Gold Award***

For my Gold Award, I created a reusable pop-up exhibit on climate change at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. The exhibit featured an interactive experiment, a movie, posters, and pamphlets to educate kids and patrons about climate change and actions they can take. I spoke with over 200 visitors, inspiring youth and raising awareness in the community, with guidance from Brady Fergusson of the Climate Solutions Accelerator.



## **Valerie Merlino**

### *Community Mural*

My gold award project consisted of a hand painted, community mural. I created portraits of 7 different influential women who were born/raised in our area and in places we know and visit regularly. I collaborated with the owner of a female-owned business to use her space for my painting. The final result has been well-received so far and has truly emphasized my purpose.



## **Adelaide Najuch**

### *Detective Camp at Windy Meadows*

I completed my Gold Award at Camp Windy Meadows in Western New York.

The purpose of my project was to educate younger Girl Scouts on many essential life skills through a fun detective themed camp. It impacted my community because it helped instill independence, leadership, and social skills in the next generation of Girl Scouts.



## **Lidia Neff**

### *Encouraging Girls to be Curious about STEM*

For my Gold Award I went to 13 different troops in Hamburg, Orchard Park, Eden, Boston, and West Seneca, NY and did STEM activities with the girls. I taught them about a specific area of STEM, women in that field of STEM, and completed related activities with them. My goal was to expose them to STEM and all of the limitless possibilities that it offers. The girls came away with new information and a greater appreciation of STEM.



## **Kit Panna**

### ***You are Gonna Be OK!***

I collected supplies to put bags together for those going into the foster care system. I partnered with organizations like Hillside Children's Center, Erie County Child

Protective Services, Trinity United Methodist Church, and Church of Nativity UCC. The purpose was to give children something more than just a garbage bag as they go through the system. I wanted to give them a bag with stuff they need, want, or things that just make them feel a little bit safer as they move through the foster care system.



## **Samantha Phillians**

### ***Establish a Library***

For my Gold Award, I addressed the lack of organization and communication in the library at Buffalo Hearing and Speech School. I created an organized book inventory and arranged books into labeled sections to improve flow. To help teachers track books and improve communication, I surveyed staff and followed up after implementation. My goal was to create a sustainable system that made it easier to find, share, and maintain library resources.



## Abigail Provost

### *Seven Hills' New Archery Range*

For my Gold Award, I designed, fundraised for, and built a new archery range at Girl Scout Camp Seven Hills after the old one was damaged. Named the Eagle Eyes Archery Range in honor of my Oma, who inspired my scouting journey and taught me archery, the project aimed to build confidence in young women through learning a powerful skill. I led volunteers, created schematics, secured donations from Lowe's, and partnered with camp staff to meet safety standards. This range will empower future Girl Scouts for years to come.



## Alivia Scheible

### *Activity Libraries for St. Ann's Community*

For my Gold Award project, I created an activity library for all eight floors of St. Ann's Community in Webster, which includes memory care and skilled nursing. I designed 69 dementia-friendly, disinfectable activity kits with 12 types of activities like I-spy bottles, reusable painting, sorting games, and more. With donations from the VFW and New Vision Pioneers, I exceeded my goal and also helped launch a traveling activity cart. The kits are now enjoyed by residents and families, and I've received positive feedback from staff and the community.



### **Amelia Sexton**

#### ***Bringing the Eastern Bluebird Back to Sinking Ponds***

During COVID, my family set up a bird feeder, and I saw Eastern Bluebirds for the first time. I learned their population in New York is uncertain, with declines in the southwest and improvements to the east. To help, my troop and I built six birdhouses and placed them at Sinking Ponds and East Aurora High School, hoping to support local bluebirds and allow others to enjoy seeing them.



### **Peter Sokolofsky**

#### ***Education About Foster Care and Support for the Kids in It***

For my Gold Award, I partnered with Comfort Cases, an organization that provides backpacks filled with toiletries, a blanket, a stuffed animal, and a book to children entering foster care. I held fundraisers and supply drives to collect donations, then delivered them to Comfort Cases in Maryland, where my family and I also volunteered. To ensure sustainability, I created an educational pamphlet about the foster care system, now available in my school social worker's office.



## Emily Stanes

### *Mental Health and Eating Disorders in Teen Girls and Boys*

I created a website to bring awareness to the severity of mental health and eating disorders. It outlines how people can help someone with a mental health disorder or someone struggling with eating disorders. I worked with my school principal, counselors, and social & emotional support to get my message on my website. The website is now on my school's wellness hub for access any time.



## Hailey Wahl

### *Helping Out Feral Cats*

My project, "Helping Out Feral Cats," focused on building shelters for feral cats, educating my family, and socializing a litter of kittens now adopted through the SPCA. I chose this issue after seeing a neighborhood cat and her kittens, realizing how quickly overpopulation can occur. Harsh winters leave many feral cats without shelter, so I partnered with Feral Cat Focus to build warm cat houses and help address this problem.



### **Meganne Walsh** *Meg's Reading Room*

I constructed free libraries that are located in three state parks. I wanted to share my passion for reading for others to enjoy.

The project also helps the environment by recycling books instead of putting in the trash. I constructed a reading buddy program and shared with daycares to help make reading fun for the children.



### **Morgan Walton** *Safe Space for Birds*

I made bird houses and put them up at the church and the local park. The purpose of my project was to help birds have safe

homes and environments. It impacted the community by keeping the animals inside of our community safe.



### **Jasmine Wessel** *Big Buddy Project*

The purpose of the Big Buddy Project was to help create a community between different levels of students to improve academically and socially, as well as

creating a support system among the students. This project took place at Notre Dame High School, and was successful in creating the supportive community, as well as including students outside of the program by creating events, and raising money for mental health studies.



## Lauren Williams

### *The Importance of Mental Health*

My Girl Scout Gold Award project raised awareness about mental health disorders and how to recognize when someone is struggling. I gave a presentation to parents on how to approach and support their children, and provided hotline cards with national help numbers, which were also made available in school counseling centers and the main office. To support students, I created a mural in the school to show that no one is alone and that support systems are available.



## Nina Yelle

### *A Lullaby for Loneliness*

Going into my project, my goal was to make seniors living in assisted care happy. To do this, I researched ways to bring community and health into the resident's lives and found that music is the best way to do that. In order to achieve my goal, I brought in student volunteers from local high schools to perform for residents at St. John's Assisted Living. Through a variety of performers, we were all able to connect with residents not only on a personal level, but also on a deeper level, allowing residents to reminisce about their lives and how music has helped shape their journey.

## Gold Award Girl Scouts Change the World

Gold Award Girl Scouts are change-makers. They have changed the world, changed their lives, and earned the most prestigious award in Girl Scouting. To earn the Gold Award, a Girl Scout identifies an issue in their community, drafts a plan to address a root cause, and leads a team of volunteers to implement it. When the project is complete, the Gold Award Girl Scout and their team have made a sustainable impact on the world that continues to last beyond their involvement.

It's a huge accomplishment that also impacts the Gold Award Girl Scout as a person. How they see the world—and how the world sees them—is forever changed. It's also a credential that will be with them for the rest of their life; having the Girl Scout Gold Award on a high school transcript or resumé can make a Girl Scout stand out when it comes to college admissions, scholarship applications, internships, and job interviews.

# Charge

I challenge you, today's Gold Award Girl Scouts, to accept this award in the spirit in which it is given to you. Know that with this award comes responsibility. As you enter this covenant of esteemed leaders, know that you are regarded with honor and respect.

I challenge you to seek beauty in all around you. Know that art, in all forms, both defines and bridges cultures.

I challenge you to honor the Earth and its living things.

I challenge you to respect yourself and to continually strive to improve care for your mind, body, and spirit.

I challenge you to remember the founder of Girl Scouting, Juliette Gordon Low, and the beginning of Girl Scouting in the USA. Know that Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world are part of your support circle, now and always.

I challenge you to give service. Give freely of yourself, expecting nothing in return.

I challenge you to care for and respect our common humanity and be an example that others may follow. Honor and celebrate the diversity of those around you. Seek to improve opportunity for others.

I challenge you to strive for excellence in all you do. Recognize the accomplishments of yourself and those around you. Know how today's achievements affect the world around your future.

By accepting this challenge, you become a changed person. You become part of an elite group who recognizes that receiving this Gold Award is not one celebratory moment but a lifetime commitment.

If you accept this challenge, please repeat after me:

I affirm my dedication to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.



**If you accept this  
challenge, please repeat  
after the speaker:**

I affirm my dedication to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. I understand my obligation to live with honor and to lead by example because the highest award of Girl Scouting has been entrusted to me. I will do my best to support other Girl Scouts on their road to Gold. I will give back to Girl Scouting what it has given me. I will respect others and live worthy of respect, as one forever bound to the ideals of Girl Scouts.

**girl scouts**   
of western new york



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