

girl scouts 
heart of the hudson



Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony



Saturday June 3, 2023
Camp Addisone Boyce
30 Mott Farm Road
Tomkins Cove, NY 10986

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.



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.

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.

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

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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 or 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.

Thank You Gold Award Mentors!

Gold Award Mentors are the incredible volunteers who have been trained by our council to assist girls in becoming Gold Award Girl Scouts.

These mentors put forth a tremendous amount of time and dedication to guide and support Gold Award Girl Scouts. They attend monthly meetings, approve projects, act as a constant resource, answer questions, lend a hand, and ensure the Gold Award requirements for each project are fulfilled to GSUSA and Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson standards.

It is their tireless work, long hours, open ears, and gentle guidance that help mold Gold Award Girl Scouts into strong, independent leaders who become courageous and optimistic world-changers. They show by example what it takes to make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson cannot thank these volunteers enough for their commitment, and hope that you will join us in extending your gratitude to all the Gold Award Mentors today and always, as we celebrate the 2023 Gold Award Girl Scouts.

Helping Eagles Soar: A Brief History of Girl Scouting's Highest Award by Jean Havens, GSHH Museum

The highest girl award in Girl Scouting has changed its name often in the past 109 years. Interestingly, the 1913 handbook, *How Girls Can Help their Country*, listed a British Girl Guide award, the Silver Fish, as the highest award in Girl Scouting. However, no girl in the United States ever earned this recognition.

Using the Silver Fish award as a model, Juliette Low developed the first official highest award for American Girl Scouts, the Golden Eaglet of Merit, in 1916. To earn this award, known simply as the Golden Eaglet, a girl had to complete fourteen proficiency badges from a list of seventeen. The award came with a red, white, and blue ribbon. Fewer than 50 Girl Scouts earned this award before it was redesigned in 1919.

The first five Golden Eaglet awards were presented to girls at the National Girl Scout convention and rally in Washington, DC on May 4, 1919. These awards were red, white, and blue ribbons that served as substitutes for the medals which were only in the production stage at that point. Later that year, the actual gold-filled medals were made available nationwide. The Golden Eaglet medal was designed by sculptor Laura Fardin-Fraser who also designed the doors for the West Point Library. In 1930, the gold-filled medals were replaced by 10K gold pins and ultimately, between 1918 and 1939, 10,658 Golden Eaglets were presented to outstanding Girl Scouts throughout the country.

Proud of the scope of this inaugural award, Juliette Low wrote in 1923: "The five requirements for winning the Golden Eaglet are character, health, handicraft, happiness, and service, and that other will expect to find in our Golden Eaglets a perfect specimen of girlhood: mentally, morally, and physically."

Introduced as an arc-shaped patch embroidered in gold thread, the Curved Bar Award succeeded the Golden Eaglet as the highest girl award in 1940. It was presented to Intermediate Girl Scouts who had attained First Class rank and was worn just above the First Class emblem. In the fall of 1947, the patch was replaced by a Curved Bar pin. Its design incorporated the First Class pin resting on a curved bar, and it was gold-plated and enameled in red and green. The Curved Bar rank continued until 1963 when the national Girl Scout program was divided into four age levels: Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes, and Seniors. At that time, the requirements for achieving First Class were determined to be challenging enough to equal those for Curved Bar, so First Class became the highest award in Girl Scouting and remained so from 1963 through 1980.

From 1963 to 1977, to achieve the First Class recognition a girl had to complete the four Challenges presented by the Cadette-level program: the Challenge of Social Dependability, the Challenge of Emergency Preparedness, the Challenge of Active Citizenship, and the Challenge of the Girl Scout Promise. She also had to complete a badge in each of the following areas: arts, home, citizenship, out-of-doors, health and safety, and international friendship. Additional Challenges were introduced in 1972, offering even more options for girls striving to attain First Class.

The Girl Scout Gold Award was introduced in 1980 as the highest award for Senior Girl Scouts. The award's requirements involved the completion on a combination of interest, leadership, career exploration, and service projects. It also required girls to demonstrate ability and skill in: goal setting, planning, putting values into action, and relating to the community. Although requirements have been changed and modified through the years since its introduction, the Gold Award remains the highest recognition for Girl Scouts today.

Gold Award Recipients



Ashley Alexander
Lakeland East Service Unit

The Impact of Representation

Ashley attended her local elementary school from kindergarten to fifth grade. Her love for reading was developed during those crucial years and the school library became her second home. Ashley enjoyed every second of the time she spent in the library, however, she started to notice the lack of characters who looked like her in those books (a young girl of color). Reading about people who looked like her would have definitely helped Ashley feel more comfortable during her elementary school years. With her project, Ashley strives to donate books to the elementary schools within her school district that feature characters of all different backgrounds- Black, Asian, Hispanic, etc. Through her efforts she hopes to expose a whole new generation of elementary schoolers to characters of different backgrounds and to give them a positive portrayal of characters with different backgrounds. Ashley's Gold Award is titled "The Impact of Representation" and it aims to address the lack of representation of literary choices within her community.



Kristen Alleva
West Lakeland Service Unit

Keep Movin' Keep Groovin'

The goal of Kristen's project "Keep Movin' Keep Groovin'" was to give senior citizens in her community the opportunity to stay active and get some exercise in a way that is fun. She accomplished this by planning and conducting various dance workshops that were filled with some healthy stretches, fun dance moves, and great upbeat music. She conducted these in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in her community. To sustain this project, Kristen also created a fun and interactive workout video with stretches and dance moves that were a part of my workshops and then gave this video to the facilities so that they could continue to dance, listen to music, stay active, and most importantly have fun. The reason she did this for her Gold Award Project was because she has been a dancer since she was three years old and has always loved to dance. Kristen wants others to experience how amazing dance can be for the mind and body and wanted to share this amazing art with others. In addition, for her Silver Award Project she also conducted dance class but with elementary and middle school age children. Going through the pandemic and seeing how it made it harder for seniors in her family to stay active made Kristen want to make a change. She wanted seniors to have the chance to get active again after being cooped up inside and not being able to do anything because of COVID-19 and wanted to help them keep active in a way that is fun. This project was very successful and the seniors loved it and said that they felt so much more healthy, happy, and just overall in a better and more active mood. Kristen also ran various workshops at Girl Scout events and taught other scouts about the benefits of dance and staying fit. Kristen is very proud of this project and is glad she was able to make a difference for so many people in her community and seeing the smiles on those senior's faces.



Ella Birenkrant
West Lakeland Service Unit

Keeping the Hudson River Clean

The goal of Ella’s project, “Keeping The Hudson River Clean,” was to prevent litter and debris from flowing through storm drains in the streets and ending up in the Hudson River. She accomplished this through an education campaign about stormwater pollution in Peekskill and Ossining that included stenciling positive messages in English and Spanish next to storm drains on the streets that said, “No More Pollution Please, Drains to the Hudson,” and “Por Favor, No Tirar, Desagües al Río Hudson,” with a picture of a crab, fish or egret. Ella grew up next to the Hudson River and cares about protecting and preserving it from pollution. She made presentations to the Peekskill City Council, Business Improvement District, and the Ossining Department of Public Works about her project. In addition to the 60 drains she stenciled in Peekskill and Ossining, there were many opportunities for in person community education, talking to residents and the public about where rainwater flows, and inspiring people to keep the beautiful Hudson River clean. Ella also ran workshops at Girl Scout events, teaching other scouts about stormwater pollution and how to stencil. She originally started her project in the spring of 2020 and the pandemic made it very challenging to continue. Ella is very proud of what she achieved.



Cassidy Bradley
Pawling Service Unit

Easy Eco Ideas for Teens

Cassidy created a website geared towards teens on how they can be more sustainable and eco-friendly in their day-to-day lives.



Leila Bradley
Pelham Service Unit

High School Survival Guide

Ever since the beginning of high school, Leila noticed the stress that ninth graders and new students feel when they enter the school. So, for her Gold Award project, she wrote and drew a comic book orientation guide for new students to her high school to ease the transition to high school and reduce their anxiety, and funded the project through a concert featuring student bands. Leila got her high school principal to be her mentor, and distributed 200 copies at orientation to the new ninth grade class. That day, she witnessed students smiling and laughing on their first day and, most importantly, not feeling overwhelmed.



Olivia Brennan
New Oaks Service Unit

Little Libraries

Olivia built and installed two Little Libraries at Sheafe Road Elementary School and Vassar Road Elementary School to provide free reading materials and a lending library for area students in grades K-6. The goal of her project was to encourage reading and literacy.



Kathleen Broderick

Congers Service Unit

COVE Sensory Integration

Kathleen provided sensory integration equipment for the COVE special education program and created individual sensory integration kits for the students of the program,

While working on her Gold Award project, she learned several new things about herself, that without this project, she may not have discovered.

Most meaningful to Kathleen, is the empathy she acquired while working on her Gold Award Project. Although she understood the significance of sensory integration before working with the COVE students, she now has a deeper understanding of the struggles they face every day. The newfound appreciation she has for their opportunity to thrive in the community is due to the compassion her Gold Award project experience has given her.



Madison Brown

Washingtonville Service Unit

Alum Night

Inspired by the challenging college admissions process, Madison decided to make it a part of her Girl Scout Gold Award. Her project centered around an event called "Alum Night." At this event, college alumni of Washingtonville High School were asked to return to the school to give their insight on the college admissions process and address any questions. Additionally, people who attended culinary school, joined the fire or police department, or took a gap year were asked to attend to offer alternate career routes that are often overlooked when graduating high school. To help with other aspects of the process, Madison led informational sessions about scholarship opportunities, mental health outreach options, and special accommodations to look for when applying to college. In the end, her project helped her graduating class as well as those in grades below, and she hopes the district continues providing students with this opportunity.



Sara Bufi

West Lakeland Service Unit

Female Veterans Awareness Project

In order to raise awareness for female veterans in her community, Sara contacted her local community center and placed a collection box in their facility. After collecting baby, personal care items, and receiving thank you cards from a younger troop, she assembled gift baskets. The baby items were donated to a local baby shower for female veterans, as Sara pivoted, she began hosting "coffee talks" to give the veterans a space to share their experiences and grievances they had with her and fellow veterans.



Claire Caltabiano
Mount Vernon Service Unit

LGBTQ+ Resource Guide: Advice from WJCS Center Lane and Westchester County Youth

Claire’s Gold Award project entailed creating an LGBTQ+ resource guide for Center Lane, the first and only educational center for LGBTQ+ youth, ages 13-21, in Westchester County, New York. She carried out this project to address what Center Lane expressed as being a gap in their services: a lack of relevant, relatable and reliable LGBTQ+ resources for young people exploring their identity. When questioning or exploring their identity, many young people today have a hard time finding information that is easy to understand or “sounds and feels” like them. This lack of information also impacts people who may be trying to educate themselves to better understand and respect the community. By creating this resource, she gave those who are exploring their identity access to first-hand information: advice from youth who walked in their shoes and struggled with the same issues. Claire told their stories, passed along their lessons learned, and surfaced the resources that helped them in their journeys. The final product includes advice directly from those who have gone through similar experiences; a vocabulary and terminology section explaining key terms and how those terms are used properly; and a media section listing books, TV shows, movies, influencers, and other public figures that respondents expressed as being helpful to them in their exploration.



Ellen Cassidy
Brewster Service Unit

191 Days

“191 Days” is a research-based Gold Award project on the life of Sgt. Clinton J. Peterson, a mixed race soldier who served 191 days in France with the 369th Infantry, Harlem Hellfighters, during World War I. The Gold Award includes a documentary and a permanent memorial plaque at Veterans Memorial Park, one of the earliest Black History markers in Putnam County, NY. Through the partnership with local historical societies and Putnam County Joint Veterans Council, Ellen used historical archives to write an original script and produce an informational documentary on Peterson’s life, featuring voice over by a Black US Army Veteran. She hosted a talk and viewing of the documentary at H.H. Wells Middle School during Black History month and today, the documentary project, including the script and research files, are included in the Putnam County Historian’s Collection and Archives. It is worth noting that for a time during his youth, Sgt. Peterson had been raised at the Almshouse (a.k.a. “Poor House”). Thanks to this project, there is now a bronze plaque memorializing his life and service in the garden at Veterans Memorial Park (located at 201 Gypsy Trail Road, Carmel, NY), the former grounds of the Almshouse. This is a fitting and lasting tribute to a Black military hero whose story was hidden but has now been brought to light. (The 13 minute documentary available on YouTube, “Remembering Clinton J. Peterson: Putnam County’s Hellfighter” <https://youtu.be/eIcpqHBS9gc>) Ellen is very proud of the many hours and teamwork that was required to fund and complete the project, executed over two years, during a global pandemic.



Rose Collins
Pleasantville Service Unit

The Pen Pal Project: Connecting Senior Citizens and Children Through the Lost Art of Letter Writing

Many senior citizens have lived home alone during the past few years without much contact outside due to the pandemic. Likewise, elementary-age children have been learning online from home, alone, without much contact with people outside their families. This project connected older adults and kids through the lost art of letter writing. As a result, 3rd-grade students at Bedford Road School learned to write an exciting and formal letter, and the seniors at the Pleasantville Senior Center became friends with their 3rd-grade pen pals.



Grace Condon Pelham Service Unit

Bringing Relief to Memory Care Patients

Grace's Gold Award aims to address the issue seen in elderly Dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's patients. These neurodegenerative diseases lead to the loss of motor functions, and there are very few treatments available. A majority of the agitations of patients are shown in the hands. Patients look for something to pull on (sheets, hair, skin, etc.) in order to bring relief. These patients deserve a source of comfort and relief for these agitations instead of their own hair or skin, especially relief that is proven to work. She looked to find a way to relieve the agitations in the hands of these patients. With her project, Grace created over 50 "fidget blankets" and donated these blankets to patients as they have been shown to immediately bring comfort to patients and relieve agitations. She attached materials such as buckles, zippers, and buttons to act as the "fidgets" on the blankets. Grace created a Youtube video in hopes that this project and awareness can reach more people. She also became a mentor to younger girls through this process. Grace met with a troop of Daisy Girl Scouts and talked to them about her Girl Scout experience, taught them about neurodegenerative diseases, and had them help her create the blankets for her project.



Amanda Costas North Salem Service Unit

Fresh Air Fun

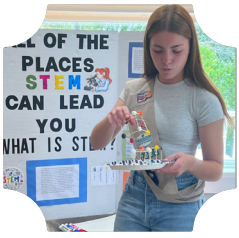
The issue Amanda addressed was how to provide appropriate preschool activities safely during a pandemic. Wearing masks and social distancing is important when trying to slow COVID-19 infections from spreading. It is very difficult for preschoolers to abide by these measures. Outdoor play is the easiest way for preschools to help fight the spread of the virus. Her project provided outdoor equipment for the preschool she attended, Play Care Early Learning Center. Amanda repurposed a lean-to with chalk paint to create an open art center. She also built a mud kitchen that enhanced the children's multi-sensory learning environment in a safe setting.



Melanie Cotrone North Salem Service Unit

Coping Cuddles

Melanie's project aimed to increase therapeutic support for young children in schools due to rising childhood anxiety. The three goals of the project were 1-to educate and provide resources for students/schools about coping skills for anxiety (including therapy dogs), 2-to encourage schools to consider utilizing and implementing therapy dogs as a coping skill for anxiety and 3-to raise community awareness about the benefits of therapy dogs, how to access them and provide information for how to train dogs for those who are interested.



Paige Cronin Somers Service Unit

All the Places STEM Can Lead You

All of the Places STEM Can Lead You is a community awareness project to spread the importance of the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in fun ways that can help students and members of the community enjoy learning and experimenting!



Ella Dundas Pleasantville Service Unit

Reducing the Trash Toll: Environmentally Responsible Consumerism at the Pleasantville Farmers Market

The climate crisis has become dire, with extreme weather causing humanitarian crises on a global scale. If we don't take significant action, everyone will be at risk, but especially the world's most vulnerable populations. Ella's Gold Award tackled this global emergency on a very local level; she created a zero waste station at her local Farmers Market, created educational curriculum for the local school, and raised awareness about our town's composting program. The Pleasantville Farmers Market is the largest Farmers Market in Westchester County. Yet, while the market has done an impressive job of promoting a sustainable food system with locally-grown food, it has not tackled many environmental issues. The market generates a lot of waste, and all of it had to be thrown out. While recognizing this as a significant problem, the volunteer-run organization didn't have the resources to tackle the issue. In order to address the unsustainable treatment of waste at the market, Ella created a zero waste station. It has a recycling and composting bin, as well as volunteers to help direct shoppers. She advised market leaders on other steps to reduce their waste, such as suggesting reusable produce bags to sell at the managers tent and compostable alternatives to commonly used materials, such as sample cups. As part of this project, Ella connected with Pleasantville Recycles, a volunteer-run government committee that focuses on providing residents with information on local environmental programs. Their website was outdated and incorrect as they had been locked out of the editing platform when their former leader moved away. COVID-19 compounded their challenges and the group had mostly disbanded when she became involved. Ella recovered editor access, and revamped their site to make it easier for residents to find information and to highlight Pleasantville's underused food scraps collection program. Moving forward, the website is easier for committee members to access and edit. Ella's project rekindled the group and led to a renewed excitement for sustainability in her town. The project required the coordination of many different people across volunteer committees, village staff, and government officials throughout the entire project. While there was an existing food scraps program in the town, it wasn't well publicized. To enable food scraps collection at the market, she had to work with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and get them to bring the composting bins to the market and then return the filled bins back to the composting center at the end of the day. Because composting has a very low tolerance for non-compostable materials, the zero waste station had to be staffed with constant volunteers. Ella connected with the Pleasantville High School Sustainability Club for volunteers to staff the station and ran a training session for volunteers as well as preparing written instructions. While Ella coordinated volunteers herself during the duration of my project, this role is now held by a Pleasantville High School sophomore and fellow Girl Scout.



MacRae Edelen Cornwall Service Unit

Ecosystems of the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum

MacRae addressed the issue of the lack of education and understanding of local ecosystems and the invasive species threatening them by creating a website that raised awareness. She used QR codes posted around the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum property to link to her website.



Violeta Egan Germonds Service Unit

Girls Go Gardening

Violeta's Girl Scout Gold Award project, Girls Go Gardening, addressed the lack of hands-on sustainability practices for students within schools and re-established her local elementary school garden. She worked with the Girl Scout troops of Bardonia Elementary School to educate them about the environment. With each troop, Violeta led interactive presentations about climate change, sustainability, indoor air pollution, and plants. She taught girls how to pot their own indoor plant. With the knowledge acquired from her presentation and activity, the Girl Scout troops and Violeta applied their skills to the garden, where they weeded, prepared the soil, and planted bulbs and flowers for the spring. She taught the Girl Scouts how to handmade their own garden decorations to further beautify their school community. In addition to the elementary school Girl Scouts, she worked with her high school's Environmental Action Club to re-establish their own school garden, as well as educate them further about climate change through interactive meetings. Her impact expanded beyond her local community, as Violeta also led a planting workshop at the Hristo Botev Bulgarian School in New York, where she talked about the importance of indoor plants, all in the Bulgarian language. Her Girl Scout Gold Award project successfully re-established her local elementary school garden, as well as educating the younger generations about climate change and ways they can help in their own community.



Isabelle Gagnon Mahopac Service Unit

The Bliss Box Project

Isabelle's Gold Award project showed teens how to recognize and manage anxiety.



Shannon Gallaher Larchmont/Mamaroneck Service Unit

Student Centered Sensory Garden

Throughout the last two years Shannon has been researching, connecting with her school community and planting to create the perfect safe space for the students at her old elementary school. MAS is home to her town's special classes program for all the elementary schools in her area and she realized prior to starting this project that it was lacking a safe space outdoors dedicated just to the program. This is where Shannon drew inspiration for her project and from there she connected with the school, the district board, nurseries, planting experts, and gardeners in her area to create a sensory garden that can be used year round.



Sophia Garcia
Scarsdale/Edgemont Service Unit

Building Survival Kits for the Homeless

By leading drawing workshops and trivia in local homeless shelters for kids, Sophia created the conditions for children in local homeless shelters to learn, explore their interests, and develop new skills. The workshops inspired children from a young age to seek out educational experiences and to always be willing to learn.



Kathleen Geraghty
Mount Pleasant Service Unit

File of Life

Kathleen's Gold Award project was creating and distributing a file of life to her community. This project addressed the issue of elderly care and more importantly the significance and importance of having your medical history available in emergencies. In emergencies, it is essential to receive the best care, promptly. Most often, however, individuals may have prior diseases or allergies that may affect how they are treated and cared for. With a file of life being accessible in individuals' homes, and medication cards remaining on each individual as they travel throughout the day, it ensures that they will receive the best care based on their current medications and previous medical history. This project benefits the individual receiving care and helps assist and aid the first responders at the scene and in hospitals.



Zoe Gopoian
White Plains Service Unit

Christmas for All

Zoe focused her Gold Award project on addressing the issue of poverty at the local homeless shelter in her community. She has been volunteering there since the sixth grade and was able to get to know so many of the kids throughout the years. Most of their families were just getting by and did not have the financial means to give gifts to their children especially at Christmas. Her goal was to provide a Christmas gift for each child with the assistance and participation of her church family. Each child would receive a wrapped gift from someone anonymously who cares and who wants to spread joy to others. Even with something so seemingly simple as providing a Christmas gift, you can have a very huge impact on those around you. Zoe reached out to the leaders in her church to discuss her plan and with their full support was able to mobilize volunteers at many steps of the project by showing them that not everything has to be done by an adult. When faced with restrictions due to COVID, she persevered to find a solution. Zoe believes many felt inspired by someone so young with a heart to serve people. She was worried several times that maybe people would not feel that they could give for any variety of reasons and that they would not have enough people to support the sizable amount of kids that she hoped to. But, by the grace of God and her generous congregation and community, every child had a sponsor. Zoe is proud to say that since the start of her participation, nearly 500 children continue to be blessed with Christmas gifts each year.



Bee Herbstman
Hastings on Hudson Service Unit

Hard Topics Made Easy

Bee created songs explaining difficult topics, like establishing boundaries or taking care of oneself, and made them more accessible by using simple language and singing them with a simple melody! Then, she uploaded them to all streaming platforms, advertised them, and performed them for fourth graders at her local elementary school! Some of her community service included assisting in writing workshops for children, and studying the effect of songs on elderly people with dementia!



Kelly Hyland
Town of Eastchester Service Unit

Maker Space with Kelly

STEM with Kelly involved working with low income kids in her community at an action program called ECAP (Eastchester Community Action Program). She worked at ECAP for seven weeks over the course of the summer to complete her leadership hours and in doing so was able to instill a love for STEM in the kids at ECAP who had previously never heard of it. Over the seven weeks Kelly gained loads of skills from working with a large group of kids. The projects utilized minimal supplies to create small machines and the kids were able to work hands on with each project.



Arianna Jones
Mount Vernon Service Unit

School Garden at the Pennington School

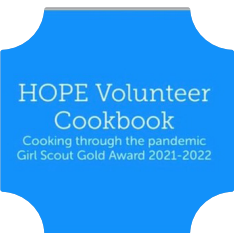
The School Garden at the Pennington School was designed and curated to help students at the school understand the environment and foster community involvement. Bright floral arrangement including sunflowers were planted when the garden was opened to the students. It was well received and appreciated by the students, faculty, parents, and community leaders, and other visitors to the Pennington School.



Michelle Kasulka
Chappaqua Service Unit

Grow 2 Garden

Michelle built two garden beds in an easily accessible location on the Clear View School's campus in Briarcliff Manor. The garden beds are enclosed by deer fencing and have access to a water source to water the plants. The students were able to use the tomatoes and eggplant in the classroom for a meal and take some home to their families. They were actually able to get in the garden and plant directly with Michelle. In addition, the school is going to incorporate it into the vocational program. This is very exciting because many students each year will be able to use the garden and learn from it.



Mila Kinnear
New Rochelle Service Unit

HOPE Cookbook

Mila interviewed outside organizations that contribute to making meals for the clientele of the HOPE soup kitchen. She asked what made HOPE special for them and the recipe that they cooked. She then compiled all of their answers together and made a video to help with outreach for the organization.



Alexandra MacAlpin

Stony Point Service Unit

Our Lady's Shrine Restorations

For Alexandra's project, she chose to restore Our Lady's Shrine located in the Marian Shrine in Stony Point, NY. The shrine needed to be refurbished after years of being exposed to natural elements. For the restoration process she repainted the Statue of Mary, placed new walkway stones, installed solar lights, de-weeded the shrine and surrounding areas, and put down a new layer of woodchips. This was all done with the support of the Marian Shrine and the help of her friends and family.



Ailish MacDonnell

Tappan Zee Service Unit

Senior Citizen Fun Olympic Games Day

Ailish organized an Olympic-themed game day where seniors had the chance to join teams and compete through mind and body exercises. Senior citizens gained a fun outlet to be competitive, athletic, and intelligent. They improved their fine motor skills and gained confidence through the activities.



Julia Maloney

North Salem Service Unit

Prom 4 Everyone

Julia worked with Northern Westchester Community Center and their pop up prom initiative and provided them with inspirational bags full of inspiring quotes as well as brand new make up to go with the provided prom dress that they picked out from the pop up shop. This was to help improve the teen's self confidence to help them enjoy their prom.



Serena Mathew

Congers Service Unit

Safety Awareness Workshop for Autistics Kids in the COVE Program

Serena implemented a safety workshop in the COVE program which is made up of students with autism at Tappan Zee High School. The kids in the program gained knowledge in how to be safe while walking on the street and tips on how to be more cautious and stay in safe situations.



Kaydi McInerney
West Lakeland Service Unit

Soothing the Soul with Art

Kaydi designed fun art activities for kids to do and worked with middle school kids to paint a mural together. This mural in the Town of Cortlandt Youth Center is a permanent part of the kitchen and its theme of “Recipe for Friendship” is part of the Youth Center programming that takes place in the kitchen. The mural was featured in the Town of Cortlandt Recreation Booklets.



Julia McLaughlin
Spackenkill Service Unit

GO Bags For Veterans

Julia addressed the root causes of homeless veterans by providing some necessities along with some items for emotional support. Hudson River Housing runs the shelter that she collaborated with, and helps veterans get on their feet. Her project provided additional items that are needed at the shelter such as toiletries, healthy snacks, socks, hats/gloves. Operation Cookie Drop also generously donated many cases of cookies to donate in each Go-Bag. Julia’s project also donated encouraging cards from fellow Girl Scout troops and Girl Scout cookies to make the veterans feel appreciated. She spread awareness in her community by speaking with sister scouts in younger troops about the issue of veteran homelessness and talking with local businesses about her project.



Molly McMorris
Millbrook Service Unit

Create Opportunity to Help the Community

The goal for Molly’s project was to improve volunteerism in her community. In order to do so, she organized and hosted a Beautification Weekend at a local cemetery, The Verbank Rural Cemetery. During this event, volunteers from many different organizations such as the local Girl Scouts, high school students, fire department members, and community members came together to clean-up the cemetery. Additionally, she presented to both the Union Vale Town Board and the Union Vale Fire Department on several occasions. Molly worked with the Town Board to update a page on their website where community members could look for opportunities to get involved. As well, she presented her project to the Fire Department who then gave a gracious donation that replaced the existing fence at the cemetery. This project was a huge success and taught her many skills such as leadership, public speaking, communication, and organization.



Isabella Mehmel
Mount Pleasant Service Unit

Reading on the Go

Due to the shortage of books, everything being online, as well as working families not being able to have time to access libraries during working hours, Isabella felt that this would be the perfect way for the community to work together to take as many books as they want as well as give as many as they please. Limited awareness of the importance of pre literacy skills and the detrimental affect on shaping the early literacy development of children express the emphasis on providing more books in the community. She implemented library boxes open 24/7, outside of three different preschools along with new literacy based activities for children of all ages. This allows children to exchange and trade their own books for any book that they feel they would enjoy reading. They would even get to keep the book once they transfer a different book into the library box. This introduction of literacy-based activities can help to determine success in schools and understand how effective it is to read young.



Miranda Miller

Pleasantville Service Unit

Friends in STEM

Miranda's Goal Award Project was called Friends in STEM and was created to give students with disabilities in the Pleasantville High School Special Education Department more opportunities to enjoy and learn science, technology, engineering, and math. With the help of student volunteers, she led after-school workshops where students did such activities as building/ launching parachutes, creating fizzy volcanoes, and coding with beads and Legos. To ensure that her Gold Award would be sustainable after she graduated, Friends in STEM was incorporated into the school's Math Honors Society, where it has continued to develop and grow.



Julia Ognibene

Town of Eastchester Service Unit

A Happy Horse is a Healing Horse

Julia's project was inspired by research demonstrating that the happiness of equine therapy horses should be a priority as their happiness will ensure better therapy sessions for riders. To address this issue, she aimed to improve the happiness of horses at an equine therapy farm and thereby improve treatment for the riders (many of which struggle with a variety of conditions including autism, mental health disorders, etc.). She purchased horse toys and slow feeders for the horses at Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship located in Bedford, NY. The toys and slow feeders will improve the quality of life of the Endeavor horses because they provided a source of joy and relaxation and will improve the horses' physical health by ensuring that they maintain a healthy weight. Improving the physical health of the horses will have a direct positive impact of the mental health of the horses allowing them to live happier. In turn, happier horses produce more effective equine therapy sessions which improves the treatment of the rider.

To fundraise, Julia hosted bake sales at The Bedford Free Library, Mount Kisco Public Library and Huguenot Park in New Rochelle. To share her project and spread awareness about the importance of equine therapy, specifically focused on explaining the importance of taking care of equine therapy horses, she hosted a meeting with her Girl Scout Troop (Troop 2438) in which she did a presentation explaining her project and teaching her peers about equine therapy. She also hosted an event at Beech Hill Farm in Pleasantville, NY. This event was for a Daisy Troop (Troop 01217) in which Julia taught the Daisies about horses, how people and horses interact, and how horses can be so beneficial to the wellbeing of people. At this event, the Daisies had the opportunity to learn about horses, interact with and groom real horses, and even enjoy horse-themed snacks. All of these events and fundraising efforts were documented on her Gold Award Project Instagram (@happyhorsehealinghorse).



Jane Olszewski

Mount Pleasant Service Unit

High School Prop Closet Updated to Reduce Waste and Spending

Jane organized Westlake High School's theater prop closet, adding labels to all bins and shelving, putting all like items together, and creating an online database where people can search what things are where to avoid confusion in the tiny closet. She also reached out to both the surrounding high schools - Valhalla and Pleasantville - principals and gave them the ways to contact our school's head of the theater department, Ms. Denler. She encouraged them to organize and make a database of their own and gave step-by-step instructions to create one themselves.



Cassidy Osborne
Congers Service Unit

Getting Fit at COVE

Cassidy created a fitness program for autistic children.



Ava Peters
Chappaqua Service Unit

Pioneering Public Outreach for New Castle Conservation Board

Ava’s project, “Pioneering Public Outreach for New Castle Conservation Board,” involved setting up social media and teaching members of the board how to use and run successfully. The town conservation board members learned how to reach the community better and communicate information to them. Ava taught the town board how to post, what to post, and how to reach out and interact with people that live in New Castle. The members of the Town of New Castle learned about the Town Conservation Board and their causes through social media.



Briana Poon
Arlington Service Unit

Science Education

Through this project, Briana created a new section in her school’s newspaper focused on educating her community about recent scientific news and discoveries.



Andie Psilopoulos
Wendys Service Unit

Junior Historian at the State Parks

Andie created educational activity booklets similar to the junior ranger program for local state parks along with pins children will receive upon completion of the booklet.



Soraya Rahni
Chappaqua Service Unit

Paint It Forward

Paint It Forward, (formerly known as Remodel For Reason), is an annual national campaign that recruits painting and contracting companies and encourages them to complete complimentary home renovation projects for a deserving group of people. The first year of the campaign was dedicated to healthcare and essential workers, and the second was dedicated to teachers and school staff.



Nicole Ravo

Minisceongo/Central Haverstraw Service Unit

Thinking Green

With the completion of her Gold Award, Nicole was able to reach her goal of informing 50 community members about pollution and its consequences. Activities such as clean up days and environmental days allowed her to connect with members of her community and successfully deepen their knowledge on pollution. The placement of a trash bin also allowed Nicole to reach her goal of changing the pollution pattern within her community as the tool for proper disposal of possible pollutants became readily accessible.



Stella Sanko

Larchmont/Mamaroneck Service Unit

Building a Bird Friendly Community

Reviving the wood duck population in a preserve where the habitat has changed from a forested wetland to a shallow pond due to the re-establishment of beaver. Stella made 5 wood duck boxes that she and a team installed at Zofnass Preserve in Pound Ridge and educated younger Girl Scouts about ecosystems and habitats.



Jordan Sealander

Pearl River Service Unit

Restoration of Nativity Set

Jordan's Gold Award Project was restoring 13 outdoor figures of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church's Nativity Set. She cleaned, sanded, repaired, painted and clear coated the 13 pieces. They ranged in size from 1' to 3' in height. The church was unsure of how old they are but definitely over 50 years old. The church and the local community is very happy and grateful for all the work she did to restore the figures for years to come.



Alanna Sheehan

Mount Vernon Service Unit

Improve Efficiency at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Food Pantry

Alanna created a more efficient system to distribute and better the Our Lady of Mount Carmel food pantry. Before her card system, distribution took four hours, now it takes two and a half hours. This allows the program to accept more families into the system. She has had many recipients tell her how much easier getting the food is with the card system. Hearing from the recipients themselves confirmed that her goal of improving efficiency for those in need was reached.

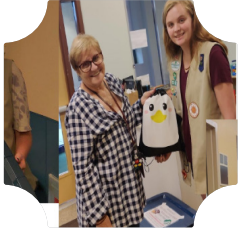


Jessica Singh

Stony Point Service Unit

Jae's Booth

Jessica and her team transformed an existing sound-proof room in a local office into a private and relaxing space for employees to de-stress from their current tasks. A lavender scent fills the room while 15 unique paintings of various calming landscapes and objects hang on the wall, which can be viewed while sitting in the room's comfy chair. Brochures on various methods of relaxation and stress relief are also available for reading in the space.



Stefanie Sommer Greenwood Lake Service Unit

Busy Bags

Stefanie wanted to address the scary emergency rooms that kids often find themselves in, so she created the Busy Bag. A Busy Bag is an animal drawstring with a 4 pack of crayons, an activity book, a sheet of stickers, and an animal eraser. These bags are aimed at giving kids something to do that will occupy their minds in a positive manner, potentially taking them out of the harsh reality they are in. The bags were then separated into bins of 70-100 and given to the local hospitals and the Greenwood Lake Ambulance. She continues to make more bags since then and drop them off when the hospital lets her know that they are low.



Emily Sorrentino West Lakeland Service Unit

Organizing with Purpose

Emily's Gold Award Project, "Organizing with Purpose" comes out of the events following the COVID 19 pandemic. The Midnight Run, once providing regular deliveries of food, clothing and a social connection to people living in shelters and on the streets, suffered a tremendous loss with the pandemic and Emily was fortunate to hear of a local family who decided to step up. The Hudson Valley Midnight Run was making weekly deliveries to NYC. She decided to join them, and although it was a very uncertain time, it gave her a tremendous sense of self-worth. Emily and her mother packed up supplies drove into the city and set up distribution on street corners all around Manhattan throughout the evening.

The experience taught her so much, and she decided to continue to help. Emily began to research how to help the family with organizing their donations, get others involved in the project, and continue to make the runs, with her mom and others. She was able to identify a need, act on that need and get others involved. Emily put together a shelving unit, added labeled bins and organized donations for the runs, cutting down the prep time by 300 percent.

Through her experience working with the Red Cross and volunteering at various blood drives, Emily was able to share her Gold Project with people, raising awareness and educating them about the Midnight Run, how to help and what type of things are distributed regularly. In addition to getting a captured audience, she was also able to access community partnership funds to purchase items to support her project goals. The Red Cross purchased cases of small bottles of "liquid gold" hand sanitizer, disposable body cloths, hot cocoa powder, garage shelving unit and the plastic bins she needed to help get the donations and supplies organized for the runs and storage. The support from the Red Cross gave her the advantage she needed to make a difference. The Hudson Valley Midnight Run was well supplied but what they really needed was help getting it all organized. Emily put together a small team, utilized her organizational skills and started getting to work organizing the supplies, shoes and clothing into labeled bins for easy "grab and go" and distribution. This also encouraged the group to seek out more help from other members of the community. Cutting the time and work makes the process so much more sustainable.

Emily shared this project at many blood drives, large and small Girl Scout events, with her High School friends and Clubs. There are always people and groups willing to help, but they don't always know the best ways to help. The mission of the Midnight Run is to make meaningful connections between the housed and homeless. Emily was fortunate to make connections have this opportunity and she enjoyed sharing my experiences with others. Now with the run so organized, they had time to come up with special themes for our runs.

These past 3 years have been challenging in so many ways and the scope of her project has gone way beyond just organizing a pantry for food, clothing, shoes and supplies. It has addressed a greater need, and especially now as we all recover from the impacts of the COVID pandemic, locally, nationally and worldwide. Completing her Gold Award project has challenged Emily and given her an opportunity to make a difference in her community and beyond.



Aidan Summer
Katonah/Lewisboro Service Unit

Summer Sunshine

Aidan worked with the Friends of Karen organization.

She made over 50 gift bags which included 2 hand made tie dye t shirts and 2 pair of hand made tie dye socks. Aidan was fortunate enough to have raised extra funds to include a decorative sign that read, “You are stronger than you think.” Friends of Karen distributed the bags to those children diagnosed with cancer and families in need.



Nordelis Vega
Spackenkill Service Unit

Council of Teens: Giving Today’s Youth a Voice

Over the past few years, Nordelis noticed a large disparity between the youth and future of the country and the adults in the community. Too often they were not listened to and being written off as merely children who can not accurately weigh in on issues, however that was anything but the truth. Due to this she created the Council of Teens which consisted of students from all districts across the county in which they spoke about the issues that mattered to them and presented those issues to public officials and to school administrators.



Elizabeth Verboys
Warwick Service Unit

Wisdom Wings

The goal of Elizabeth’s Gold Award was to make survivors of sexual abuse feel heard and feel that they are noticed. She worked with the Start by Believing Project to gain knowledge of what should go in packages she put together for sexual abuse survivors. These packages were dropped off at police stations all throughout the county and she hopes to get them as widespread as possible. Another goal is prevention of abuse of children, so they know what to do if someone tries to cross their boundaries. Elizabeth also published a children’s book entitled “Lee Learns a Lesson.” She hosted events where she read the book to children. She encourages victims and survivors to report their cases by providing them with information and comforting materials to hopefully make the process easier.



Sabrina Vilato
New Oaks Service Unit

Level the Playing Field

The goal of Sabrina’s project was to highlight female athletes. Ignoring the inequity in the treatment of females, shout out women in sports so loudly that the world has no choice but to hear them. Her project included hosting clinics for young female athletes to meet older girls excelling in their sports, pushing her school and school district to give more social media and press attention to girls’ teams, pushing her school/district to create a student athlete advisory council and have cheerleaders perform at girls’ team events, creating graphics highlighting all female players and their achievements both in school and on social media, creating a website for her district athletic Hall of Fame, calling special attention to female athletes.



Isabella Walsh **Deforest Service Unit**

Songbird Symphony

Songbird Symphony is a Girl Scout Gold Award project aimed to help the decline in the songbird population. This was addressed by building a Songbird Sanctuary, that is located at Rockland BOCES open to the public. With this added sanctuary, songbirds can use it as a refugee, a place to live, breed, and migrate to. Isabella's project will be sustained beyond her involvement by Rockland BOCES staff. This project created a more connected community through nature, and learning new skills of recording population, identifying different songbirds, and how to create bird feeders from recyclable items.



Erin Weitzman **Pleasantville Service Unit**

Project Paint

Dementia and Alzheimer's can cause patients severe frustration, lack of motivation, and loss of empathy. She used art and creative projects to stimulate the parts of the brain that allow patients to relax, and enjoy calm feelings as well as boosting their confidence in ability to do things for themselves. Erin led watercolor painting projects with the Alzheimer's and Dementia patients via Zoom. She received positive feedback from the staff members of the facilities she worked with.



Lydia Wilke-Olsen **Somers Service Unit**

Inspiring Young Women to STEM

Lydia's project sought to empower young girls to explore the STEM fields, as women have traditionally been underrepresented in these fields. To reach this goal, she conducted a series of interviews with women working in or studying the STEM fields and compiled them into a video. Additionally, she created a website (empoweringgirlsinstem.com) with helpful resources for girls interested in STEM subjects. Lydia then presented to younger classes in my district, ranging from fifth to eighth grade.



Madeline Williams **Monroe Woodbury Service Unit**

Helping Hippotherapy

Madeline's Gold Award Project was designed for use at Winslow Therapeutic Riding Center in Warwick, NY. Winslow provides a therapeutic horseback riding experience to help riders with cognitive functioning. Riding horses relaxes tight muscles, improves strength, coordination and motor skills, and stimulates the respiratory and vestibular systems as well as neurological activity. One of the main components of a hippotherapy or equine-assisted therapy lesson is overcoming challenges and trying new activities that engage the senses. Winslow has an outdoor sensory trail where different activities and challenges are presented such as opening a mailbox and identifying the contents. However, last year they requested an additional experience: a small arched bridge for riders to go over on horseback. She had the honor of granting their wish and presenting an entirely new experience for the riders.

Atlantic Tomorrow's Office
Congratulates
Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson's
2023 Gold Award Girl Scouts!

Your projects have made a positive impact to your communities and the people around you. Keep up the great work as you continue to make the world a better place and be an inspiration to us all.

The logo for Atlantic Tomorrow's Office, featuring the word "Atlantic" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A blue swoosh underline is positioned under the "A" and "t" of "Atlantic".

tomorrowsoffice.com

Congratulations
Rose, we are so
proud of you!!



Love,
Mom, Dad,
Grant & Bingo

Congratulations Ella
Dundas on your Gold
Award.

We are so proud of you!

Love Mama, Dad,
Logan, Asher, and
Clover



CONGRATULATIONS ON ACHIEVING
YOUR GOLD AWARD!
WE COULD NOT BE MORE PROUD OF THE
INCREDIBLE WORK YOU'VE DONE AND
CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHERE YOUR LOVE
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT TAKES YOU!



With all our love,
Mom, Dad, Grace & Jack

Congratulations Isabella!

On earning your Girl Scout Gold Award.
“Songbird Symphony”



We are proud of your dedication, hard work and determination to complete your beautiful project.

Love, Mom, Dad, Billy, Anthony, Christian, and Jinxy.



Congratulations Madison!



We are so proud of you and
all you have accomplished!

Love, Mom, Dad, Olivia,
Isabella & Craig

*Congratulations
Paige!*

All of the Places

STEM

Can Lead You!



Congratulations to all 2023
Gold Award Girl Scouts!



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