



**Lillian Hoffart**

Overland Park, KS



## Branch Out at Your Local Library

Lillian Hoffart has been a Girl Scout for 13 years and is in Troop 283 in Service Unit 675. She is currently a senior at Blue Valley Southwest.

Lillian's Gold Award project addressed the issue of youth literacy in her local community. Children, especially middle school students, often will not read books unless they are required in school and rarely will explore other genres of literature. Her project, a library project called "Branch Out at Your Local Library" established a middle school book club covering varying genres and topics. It also provided recruitment materials and project findings to librarians to help them establish additional book clubs. Lillian's hope is that her book clubs and materials fulfill an area established by the library system as "lacking" and inspire young readers to try new genres, read more regularly and in turn, improve literacy rates.

Lillian worked with the Blue Valley Branch of the Johnson County Library and other Girl Scouts to host the book clubs. She recruited students to attend with posters and personal invitations. Many librarians have noticed there is a decrease in the number of middle schoolers interacting with library programs. Lillian worked to rejuvenate interest for this age group in these programs. Her hope for the project is that it creates a lifelong love of reading in students, which will positively impact their lives in a variety of ways. Having a literate population improves the world through better empathy, understanding and communication.