



Mira Bhagat

Overland Park, Kansas



## Playful Pooches

Mira Bhagat has been a Girl Scout for 13 years and is in Troop 931 in Service Unit 674. She is currently a senior at Blue Valley North.

Mira's Gold Award project addressed the issue of a lack of awareness about the emotional state (especially anxiety) of shelter dogs. When dogs enter a shelter, it's often a scary environment. They're surrounded by new people, new dogs, new smells and have a new home, all things that can cause stress. After adoption, they transition again to a new home with a new life. Mira wanted to educate the public about the stress dogs experience and how to help combat it by providing the dogs with mental stimulation. The toys and activities she created for the dogs will not only improve their lives while at the shelter, but also their mood, which may increase their adoptability.

Mira worked with Wayside Waifs, her family, a local veterinarian and community members to gather donations, create toys and implement the project with shelter dogs. By creating durable toys that can be cleaned in a dishwasher, Mira is ensuring that dogs can benefit from the project for years to come. She also created a digital component to the project that will enable anyone on the web to access her project and duplicate it in her community. By improving the mental state of shelter dogs, Mira is contributing to overall animal happiness and hopefully reducing the number of dogs in shelters by making them more adoptable!

**Because of Girl Scouts...I have gained more self-confidence and desire to make positive changes in my community. I am now more interested to learn about issues around the world and am not afraid to step up in the leadership role.**