



# Celebrate Gold

## Madeline Ampleman

Lenexa, KS



## Fill a Boat with Coats and Help Our Community!

Madeline was a Girl Scout for 13 years in Troop 956 in Service Unit 638. She is currently attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to major in Aerospace Engineering.

Madeline was inspired by her own experience as a Girl Scout on how difficult it can be for girls to gather everything necessary to run their own canned food or coat donation drive. To help with organizing more donation drives, Madeline created a template for Girl Scout troops and other youth groups to learn how to hold a winter clothing drive. She led a troop through the process, helping the girls make crucial decisions and spotlighting their creativity as they chose to build a cardboard "boat" to collect the coats in.

To further her project, Madeline's school district will share this guide as part of the Shawnee Mission School District Clothing Exchange, allowing even more groups to hold their own donation drives.

**Because of Girl Scouts...I have learned how to become a leader.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Alayna Baker**

Independence, MO



## The Dangers of Social Media

Alayna Baker was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 1835 in Service Unit 622. Alayna graduated from William Chrisman High School in May. She plans to pursue nursing at Metropolitan Community College and then finish her degree at William Jewell College.

Alayna's project identified a community need for safer social media practices and education on online safety. Using the Girl Scouts Cybersecurity Badge curriculum, Alayna led a workshop for Cadette Girl Scouts to complete all three cybersecurity badges before they entered high school. Alayna created an interactive curriculum with engaging games and even a live online quiz to test girls on what they learned. The workshop also featured a speaker from the Lee's Summit Police Department to further educate participants.

To ensure everyone has access to safe social media practices, Alayna created an online toolkit for future troops to run their own Cybersecurity Badge workshops that can be used by troops across the region for years to come.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have learned of a new confidence in myself. I wouldn't go back and change anything.**





# Celebrate Gold

## Sudeepthi Bangalore

Topeka, KS



## Simplifying the "Think like a Programmer" Journey

Sudeepthi Bangalore was a girl member for 11 years in Troop 7170 in Service Unit 701. She is currently a sophomore at Kansas State University studying chemical engineering.

Sudeepthi was inspired by the STEM Journeys that were published by Girl Scouts to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math. She identified that troop leaders were afraid to lead these journeys, since most leaders do not have outside knowledge of the topic. Sudeepthi simplified the Think Like a Programmer Journey for all ages to make it more friendly for troop leaders by rewriting and condensing the materials, creating a glossary, and creating a kickstart planning guide to hold an event.

The resources that Sudeepthi created will allow Girl Scout troops across the region to complete the Think Like a Programmer Journey. Thanks to her efforts to share her project with additional troop leaders through social media they can now utilize these great resources. Without Sudeepthi, many girls would not have the opportunity to complete this essential STEM Journey.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have developed a love for community service, acquired a lifelong group of friends, and built self confidence.**



# Celebrate Gold



## Ghada Bishtawi

Olathe, KS

### Muslim Student Association

Ghada has been a Girl Scout for 11 years in Troop 4162 in Service Unit 672. She is currently a senior at Olathe Northwest High School and plans to attend the University of Kansas to study Biochemistry after graduation.

As a student at Olathe Northwest, Ghada identified a need for greater diversity and representation among her classmates. Some of her peers reported that they felt that their school may not be a safe place for them to flourish as a minority. Ghada addressed this need by creating the Muslim Student Association, a club where Muslim students and others could learn about different cultures and religions. Club attendance continues to grow, and the members are working on creating a prayer room at the school for Muslim students to pray.

Ghada has worked with club members to form a board and officers, so the club can continue on after her graduation. She has also connected her club with the National Muslim Student Association Network to continue to increase participation. The group also looks forward to future events, such as hosting an Imam as a guest speaker to learn more about Muslim culture and create a safe and welcoming space for all students.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I learned how to be more confident and communicate with others.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Grace Bowen**

Raymore, MO



## Creation and Renovation for Ray-Pec's Mental Health

Grace Bowen was a Girl Scout for 12 years in Troop 887 in Service Unit 654. She recently graduated from Raymore-Peculiar High School with plans to pursue a degree in Mathematics at Truman State University.

Grace's Gold Award project focuses on creating murals in the bathrooms at Raymore-Peculiar High School to promote mental health awareness and positivity. Many students today face a lack of emotional support at home, and Grace wanted to provide not only a colorful, safe space at school, but also a website with resources that students could access on their own to get support. She compiled articles, hotlines, and other resources to help her fellow high school students.

With the rise of mental health challenges that teens are facing, Grace's project serves as an on-demand resource for anyone around the world needing support. Not only by supporting the population at her school, but also anyone with an internet connection, she's helping empower young people to help them live better, happier lives.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have been able to meet new people and make friends while also learning about important life skills like leadership, communication, and marketing.**



# Celebrate Gold



## Audrey Brown

Leawood, KS

### Connecting Middle Schoolers to High School Through Sports

Audrey has been a Girl Scout for 11 years as part of Troop 312 in Service Unit 674. She is currently a senior at Blue Valley North High School, and after graduation, plans to pursue a degree in Environmental Engineering and run track in university.

As a passionate track and field athlete, Audrey noticed a lack of transition plans for athletes from middle school to high school sports. Her project focuses on building connections in the community between middle school and high school students to decrease any intimidation or fears about trying out for high school sports. Audrey held a track and field camp where middle schoolers were able to practice each event and meet high school athletes and coaches.

Audrey made sure to involve underclassmen in the planning of the camp, so the camp can continue to build bonds between future teammates. Thanks to Audrey's passion, even more students will discover the rewarding sport of track and field.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I was provided with so many fond memories and opportunities to experience new things and adventures. It has also provided me many leadership opportunities, community activities, and lifelong friendships. Lastly, Girl Scouts has formed relationships with my troop leaders as mentors who frequently give advice and support.**





# Celebrate Gold



## Makenzie Brown

Blue Springs, MO

### St. Mary's Blanket Closet

Makenzie Brown has been a Girl Scout for 12 years in Troop 1453 in Service Unit 647. She recently graduated from Grain Valley High School with plans to pursue a degree in Forensic Science at Columbia College.

Makenzie's Gold Award project provides a blanket closet for the patients at St. Mary's Medical Center in Blue Springs, MO. She raised funds to purchase blankets and other supplies to create a blanket closet at St. Mary's. The blankets would be provided to patients on an as needed basis to help ensure they were warm.

The blankets and resources provided by Makenzie will continue to serve the patients at St. Mary's for years to come. She has also engaged a Daisy Girl Scout troop at Prairie Branch Elementary to do an annual blanket drive to continue refilling the closet.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I learned value life skills helping me reach my goals.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Kendall Carey**

Gladstone, MO



## Clardy Elementary Butterfly Garden

Kendall Carey has been a Girl Scout for 10 years in Troop 592 in Service Unit 606. She will be a senior in the fall at Oak Park High School with plans to pursue a degree in Elementary Education at Northwest Missouri State following graduation.

Kendall's Gold Award project brings STEM experiences centered around nature to elementary school students in her community. She created a butterfly garden that engaged more than 60 students as they learned about butterfly lifecycles and the ways they benefit the ecosystem. In addition to the experience at the garden, she created teaching resources and donated books on butterflies to Clardy Elementary.

Through the experiences at the butterfly garden, children were able to see the lifecycle of butterflies first-hand rather than learning from videos and books. This real-world learning will only further help these students develop critical thinking and STEM skills. The garden will be cared for at the school through a Daisy Girl Scout troop and through school staff, meaning it will be available for future students to enjoy and learn from.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have had many exciting experiences that I wouldn't have had without Girl Scouts. I have grown as a young woman and have made life long friends.**

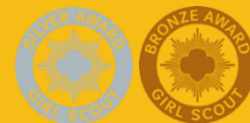




# Celebrate Gold

**Olivia Chatburn**

Grain Valley, MO



## Bridging into Tomorrow

Olivia Chatburn was a girl member for 11 years in Troop 1652 in Service Unit 647. She is currently a sophomore at Graceland University studying nursing.

Olivia's project addresses an essential milestone for Girl Scouts: bridging ceremonies that celebrate moving from one level to the next. She noticed that her Service Unit did not have a physical bridge that girls traditionally cross in their ceremonies, so she built a compact bridge that could easily fit into a car so many troop leaders can use it.

Additionally, Olivia created a website with resources for holding a bridging ceremony to help leaders create a special celebration for their troops. She collected information on many different bridging ceremonies to offer options for troops. Olivia's project will live on her service unit, who will take ownership of the bridge to lend out to troops for their ceremonies.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have made so many connections and have been able to be more confident in myself.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Aundrea Denham

Independence, MO



## Gun Safety and Education

Aundrea was a girl member for 11 years in Troop 4024 in Service Unit 622. A graduate of Fort Osage High School, she now works at the Winchester Lake City Ammunition Plant.

Aundrea's project focuses on gun safety and education for all ages, aiming to help the community handle situations where they may unexpectedly find a firearm. She specifically worked on educating children who may not know what to do if they find a gun by reaching out to local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops to attend her workshop. Working with local law enforcement, Aundrea split up into two groups for ages 4-12 and ages 13-65+. For children, her curriculum focused on "stop, don't touch, run, and tell a grown up." For the older group, four speakers provided insight on the different ways gun violence can impact people's lives, as well as explaining how to legally own, carry, and safely lock firearms away from others.

To continue this education in her community, Aundrea collected information from the law enforcement speakers and created a presentation that Scout leaders can use to educate future classes of scouts, maintaining a safe and educated community for years to come.

**Because of Girl Scouts...I've learned to achieve my goals, be a leader when needed, problem solve and that being stubborn can be a good thing.**

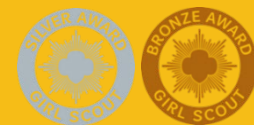




# Celebrate Gold

## Tasneem Fatimah

Overland Park, KS



## Heartfelt Healthcare

Tasneem Fatimah was a girl member for ten years in Troop 3113 in Service Unit 672. She is a freshman at Missouri Southern State University, where she attends a combined medical program with the Kansas City University School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Tasneem was inspired to address inequities in healthcare access for her Gold Award project. In an effort to help people who lack insurance or refugees and immigrants who may not understand the U.S. healthcare system, Tasneem organized a free health clinic with two local physicians at the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) Relief Food Pantry in Raytown, Missouri. Visitors to the clinic were able to receive basic medical monitoring (oxygen levels, heart rate, and blood pressure) and consult with a physician to receive advice. Tasneem also created pamphlets with information on free healthcare resources in the area and healthy lifestyle tips for illness prevention to continue to help her community.

Twelve patients visited the free clinic and rated their care an average of 4.75/5, reporting that while they struggled with healthcare access, Tasneem's project offered them important resources and information. Thanks to Tasneem, the ICNA Relief Food Pantry has a plan to continue offering this essential medical care to underserved populations.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I learned the value of effective collaboration, healthy friendship dynamics, taking initiative and presenting myself with confidence.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Kripa Gauba

Overland Park, KS



### A Day at the Capitol

Kripa Gauba has been an Indy Girl Scout for 11 years in Service Unit 675. She will be a senior in the fall at Blue Valley West High School. After high school graduation, Kripa plans to pursue a degree in Interdisciplinary Science & Business.

Kripa's Gold Award project creates an opportunity for middle and high school aged girls to get involved in the political system with a "Day at the Capitol." Working with her existing non-profit, GirlsLead Co, she was able to bring politicians and girls together to talk about government and policy. The day consisted of meeting Gov. Laura Kelly, speaking with various legislators and elected officials regarding their work, watching House and Senate Sessions, and touring the Kansas Statehouse! The project fostered civic engagement, leadership development, and community change, inspiring future generations of female leaders.

In addition to this amazing event in Kansas, Kripa created a "playbook" for changemakers in other states to organize their own "Day at the Capitol" to extend this impact nationwide. Through her non-profit, GirlsLead Co., she'll be able to continue organizing events in Topeka and reaching girls nationwide. She also created a website ([www.girlslead.us](http://www.girlslead.us)) and Instagram (@girlsleadco) that provide resources for girl empowerment and engagement, in addition to year-round workshops and programs that have reached more than 200 girls in Kansas City.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I discovered my inner strength, developed a passion for leadership, and gained the confidence to make a lasting impact in my community.**





# Celebrate Gold

## Joy Goehring

Greenwood, MO



## The Joy of Scouting: Flag Retirement Boxes for the Community

Joy Goehring was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 1320 in Service Unit 650. She is currently a sophomore at Fort Hays State University studying Business Marketing and Graphic Design.

Joy's project identified a need in the community to appropriately retire American flags. She previously noticed that residents were unsure how to retire a flag and often threw them away or left them to collect dust on a shelf. Joy built and installed two secure drop boxes for community members to leave their flags for a proper retirement ceremony at the Greenwood, Missouri City Hall and at Lee's Summit West High School by the JROTC Wing. Additionally, to ensure there were community members available to retire the flags, Joy held an ice cream social where she taught younger Girl Scout troops how to hold a Flag Retirement Ceremony.

After just a few days, one drop box already had five flags inside to retire. Joy's project not only provides a needed resource for people to retire flags, but also continues a meaningful Girl Scout tradition of holding Flag Retirement Ceremonies with other troops in her community.



Because of Girl Scouts...I am Joy. Girl Scouts has played an instrumental role in shaping my vision for life, filling me with values such as empathy, problem-solving, self-empowerment, tenacity, and teamwork. GS gave me a sense of belonging in a new school and a group of sisters who remained my friends through high school. It broadened my horizons, sparking curiosity to help me find my passions and embrace the endless possibilities that lie ahead. It gave me a deeper appreciation for nature and made me a leader through empathy, kindness, and service. As I continue my journey, I will carry the lessons and values of Girl Scouts in everything I do; I'm grateful for the foundation Scouting has provided in shaping the person I am today.



# Celebrate Gold

## Kimberly Greene

Kansas City, MO



## Do You Wanna Build a Library?

Kimberly Greene has been a Girl Scout for 11 years in Troop 592 in Service Unit 606. She is currently a senior at Oak Park High School and plans to pursue a degree in Pediatric Occupational Therapy after high school graduation.

After several local libraries in her area closed due to COVID, Kimberly identified a need for helping children with the transition from early childhood to kindergarten by learning to use the library. Working with her local church's preschool, Kimberly worked to improve the variety and availability of books for students by finding new books and processing donated books, building and installing new shelves, and even creating a new box with a return chute for children to get an authentic library experience.

To encourage children to continue checking out books, Kimberly created a log so students could track their reading progress. She also provided each student with a reusable book bag that can be reused from year to year. Kimberly's project will foster a love of reading and confident library users as they prepare to transition to kindergarten.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I will take advantage of every opportunity to help others and use my talents.**

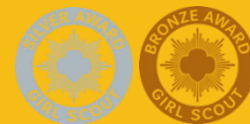




# Celebrate Gold

**Em Hamer**

Lenexa, KS



## Never Too Old For Girl Scouts

Em Hamer was a Girl Scout for 13 years in Troop 514 in Service Unit 671. She recently graduated from De Soto High School with plans to attend Kansas State University in the fall, studying Regional and Community Planning.

Em's Gold Award project gave older members of her community the chance to live their Girl Scouting dreams by creating their own troop at Aberdeen Village! She named the troops "Silver" and "Gold" troops as a nod to the song Make New Friends. During troop meetings, the members got to participate in community service projects, crafts and similar Girl Scout activities. For many of the residents, they either missed their Girl Scouting experience, or never got to experience Girl Scouts as a young person, so these troops gave them a social outlet and a way to connect with the world of Girl Scouting.

The Silver and Gold troops can continue at Aberdeen Village and any other independent living community through the resources Em created – including a guide with step-by-step instructions on creating and running a troop in these communities. What a way to spread the Girl Scout experience!



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have has so many opportunities and experiences that have improved my confidence and ability to be a good leader in various aspects other of my life.**



# Celebrate Gold



## Alissa Harris

Kansas City, KS

### The BlueCrew

Alissa Harris was a girl member for nine years in Troop 2307 in Service Unit 625. She is a sophomore at Kansas City Kansas Community College.

Alissa's Gold Award project, the BlueCrew, created a new club at Sumner Academy of Arts and Science to increase student, staff, and parental involvement in the school after a decline due to COVID. Her club encouraged students to support their classmates by attending athletic events and music concerts, joining the BlueCrew on Instagram to learn about upcoming activities, and creating special posters and other decorations for school events. Alissa reported a visible increase in attendance at every school event the club promoted and a significant improvement in school spirit and student support at Sumner Academy!

The BlueCrew continues on after Alissa's graduation thanks to faculty sponsors and a new board of student leaders elected by the club. Alissa hopes the BlueCrew will inspire students to appreciate their scholastic community and continue to increase student involvement for years to come.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I was able to see myself in a position that I had no idea I'd be able to hold. Girl Scouts allowed me to be exposed to different people who empowered me to chase my dreams, and even funded me to get there.**

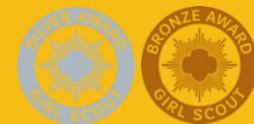




# Celebrate Gold

**Jenna Heafner**

Lee's Summit, MO



## Spreading STEM

Jenna Heafner has been a Girl Scout for 13 years in Troop 143 in Service Unit 649. She recently graduated from Lee's Summit High School and plans to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education and to become a kindergarten teacher after graduating college.

Jenna's Gold Award project focuses on bringing STEM-based "camp" opportunities to underserved children in KCMO. Working with her high school robotics team, they brought a Bricks2Bots camp to children at a local shelter and helped the children learn basic robotics and other STEM-based activities. The attendees built and programmed robots made out of LEGOs and participated in other hands-on science experiments.

This project will continue through the efforts of other students at Lee's Summit High School. The robotics team has committed to bringing the camp to a local community shelter at least once a year. By establishing this program, she'll be able to not only provide a STEM education for students, but also empower other students to learn leadership and teaching skills.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have been able to gain many other experiences that I might not otherwise have gotten.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Heavyn Hennen

Atchison, KS



## Heavyn's Haven

Heavyn Hennen has been a Girl Scout for 11 years in Troop 1904 in Service Unit 801. She recently graduated from Atchison High School with plans to attend Hutchison Community College. From there, she would like to transfer to Kansas State University where she will pursue her veterinary medicine degree.

Heavyn's Gold Award project focuses on getting girls in her community to be more active outside and work on team building skills. She raised funds and built an outdoor wall at Camp Meadowlark. The wall and other activities encourage girls to be more physically active, enjoy the outdoors and live a healthier life! In addition to physical exercise, girls learn social skills through team building at the camp.

The outdoor wall will continue to be accessible for camp attendees and inspire years of physical activity and fun. To ensure the wall remains intact without a lot of upkeep, she used sustainable materials and compiled a list of materials should anything need to be replaced. This addition to camp provides an activity future girls will continue to enjoy.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have found my voice when speaking up. It has given me the confidence that I will need in the future.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Sara Houghton**

Troy, KS



## Playful Park Upgrade

Sara Houghton has been a Girl Scout for 12 years in Troop 1615 in Service Unit 801. She will be a senior in the fall at Troy High School. After graduation, Sara plans to earn her associate's degree in business and complete flight attendant training after she graduates.

Sara's Gold Award project focuses on making a local park more appealing and welcoming to community members. She wanted to encourage people to take advantage of all the amenities available at the park, she worked to provide welcome signage, a banner with information and other upgrades to make the park stand out. A well-maintained, vibrant park offers her community members the chance to get outside, boost their mood and feel safe in their community.

Through the signage and banner, that should be made to last a long time, Sara hopes the park will continue to be a positive staple in her community for years to come. What a great, lasting legacy for a Girl Scout to leave in her hometown!



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have participated in multiple community service projects like volunteering at local shelters, food drives, and cleaning parks. Girl Scouts as taught me the importance of teamwork, leadership, and the impact of making the world a better place.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Molly James**

Overland Park, KS



## New Educational Resource for JOCO Youth Court Program

Molly James was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 1076 in Service Unit 694. She is currently a freshman at Washington University in St. Louis studying Philosophy as part of the Policy and Law track.

Inspired by her volunteer experience with the Johnson County Youth Court System, Molly noticed that many youth respondents struggled to reflect and learn from their charges. She worked alongside educators, youth specialists, Youth Court volunteers and administrators, mental health specialists, and more to create an activity journal to help guide youth through their sanctioning process and offer them resources and help for the future. Identifying a need for increased accessibility, Molly also added a text to speech feature that will aid recipients with reading difficulties.

Molly's journal will continue to be shared with respondents by the Youth Court. It will also be incorporated into the volunteer training process so that it can be shared with even more youth. Thanks to Molly, youth respondents will further reflect on their experiences and further her passion for restorative justice in her community.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I know I can achieve my goals with hard work, problem-solving, and dedication.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Jesse Johnson**

Kansas City, MO



## Scene Shop Organization

Jesse Johnson was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 4519 in Service Unit 620. She recently graduated from Pembroke Hill School with plans to pursue a degree in Stage Management in the Northeast region.

Jesse's Gold Award project focuses on creating a safe and productive scene shop for theatre artists at her school. A scene shop is where theatre artists build props, scenic elements and other things for theatrical performances. It is a place of creativity, exploration, engineering and collaboration. She wanted to share her knowledge to make theatrical arts more accessible to everyone and ensure a safe, organized environment was consistently available to students and staff.

In addition to creating an organized system for Pembroke, Jesse wanted to make her organization system available to other organizations and schools who were facing similar struggles. By creating a blog with her experiences and resources, she hopes that not only will the shop at Pembroke stay organized, but that other groups around the world can create safe, organized and inspiring scene shops!

**Because of Girl Scouts...I have had access to fun learning experiences.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Marissa Johnson

Raytown, MO



## Girls Just Wanna do Theater

Marissa was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 40 in Service Unit 622. She is attending the University of Kansas and pursuing a Music Therapy degree.

When most people think of participating in theater, they first think of the actors on stage. Marissa's project offers an opportunity for girls to learn about many of the other parts of theater including costumes, hair and makeup, lighting, sound, and scenic design. She worked with the Raytown Theater to offer a workshop with experts in each area, who led projects that were used in the theater's productions.

The girls who attended Marissa's workshop were more receptive to joining theater programs at their schools, even if they had never participated before, because they were interested in parts other than acting. Marissa's project will continue to inspire future students through future productions, where the cast can recreate the workshop using her project instructions.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I am a determined, well-rounded, kind, and confident young woman. I couldn't have asked for a better place to explore and become who I am.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Rubani Kaur**

Fairway, KS



## Endangered Animals and How We Can Help

Rubani has been a Girl Scout for 6 years in Troop 4519 in Service Unit 620. She is currently a junior at Pembroke Hill High School and plans to enter a pre-medicine program after graduation.

Inspired by her love for animals, Rubani's Gold Award project shares information on endangered animals in the local community and around the world. She created a coloring book with information on endangered species to spread awareness, researching and drawing the animals. She also held a successful event in partnership with the Kansas City Public Library, where she distributed copies of the book to local families.

Rubani's coloring book lives on through a website and social media platforms that she created to continue to raise awareness. She also left copies at the library for community members to pick up and learn from.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I made great friends and had fun experiences.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Syeda Khadijah**

Overland Park, KS



## Eliminating Plastic Waste One Step at a Time

Syeda Khadijah has been a Girl Scout for eleven years in Troop 4162 in Service Unit 672. She is a junior at Blue Valley West High School and plans to pursue her nursing degree after graduation.

When volunteering at the Islamic Center of Johnson County, Syeda noticed that there were no drinking fountains or water outdoors for when children went out to play. Therefore, many kids were using single-use plastic water bottles instead of refillable, reusable options. Syeda's project installed an outdoor water fountain with multiple spouts and a bottle filler attachment so that visitors had access to drinking water. Additionally, Syeda distributed reusable water bottles to all of the children that attended summer camp at the Islamic Center and helped the children decorate their bottles so that they would bring them back to camp, eliminating single use plastic waste.

Syeda's project meets an essential need for the community, but also encourages those who use the water fountain to live a more eco-friendly and environmentally conscious lifestyle. With easy access to refillable water, the amount of single use plastics at the Islamic Center of Johnson County will decrease, creating a less wasteful environment for the future.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I was able to learn valuable life skills, develop leadership abilities, and make lifelong friendships.**

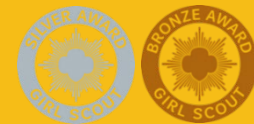




# Celebrate Gold

**Makayla Lebruska**

Topeka, KS



## Community Service for Kids

Makayla was a girl member for 10 years in Troop 7170 in Service Unit 701. She is currently a sophomore at Kansas State University, where she is pursuing a degree in cybersecurity.

Makayla's Gold Award project offers more children an opportunity to get involved with community service projects. She noticed a lack of volunteer opportunities for youth, and then organized three different projects to help them get involved with their community – creating “sock snowmen” to donate to Fellowship and Faith, designing Valentine's Day cards for elderly residents at Aldersgate Village, and building cat toys for Helping Hands Humane Society.

To continue encouraging youth volunteer opportunities, Makayla created a list of 25 different project ideas that she shared with Girl Scout Troop Leaders and with her church's before and after school program. She also encouraged the children and adult volunteers to keep seeking out opportunities to help their community – a lesson sure to impact these people for years to come!

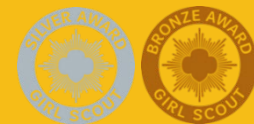
**Because of Girl Scouts...I am more comfortable trying new things.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Sammie Magee

Louisburg, KS



### Sammie's Toy Drive: 21 Butterflies

Sammie Magee has been a Girl Scout for 12 years in Troop 0014 in Service Unit 675. She is homeschooled and plans to graduate this summer. Sammie then plans to attend aesthetician school in the fall and wants to open her own business in the future.

Sammie's Gold Award project focuses on providing support to those impacted by mass gun violence, specifically for the survivors of the massacre at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas. She created a 501c3 organization that collected toys and delivered them during a Sammie's Toy Drive event a year and a half after the shooting. She was able to provide support through providing toys, along with other activities at the event to help the survivors heal. Everything Sammie's Toy Drive accomplishes is for and honors the 21 lives lost within the walls of Robb Elementary School.

For this project Sammie created a manual with valuable information on forming a 501c3, running a toy drive and other resources to empower others to start similar drives. In addition, the 501c3 she set-up – Sammie's Toy Drive – will continue to evolve, bring resources together and support survivors.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I was given the opportunity to reach one of my goals of forever memorializing the 21 victims of the Robb Elementary School massacre within my project.**





# Celebrate Gold

## Natalie Martinez

Kansas City, KS



## Plastic to Bedrolls

Natalie was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 2307 in Service Unit 625. She is currently a sophomore at Saint Louis University where she is pursuing her Nursing degree.

Inspired by a combined passion for recycling and for helping homeless people in her community, Natalie merged these two interests to create a unique Gold Award project. Using plastic bags, she created crocheted bedrolls for people who may be sleeping outside. Partnering with Cross-Lines Community Outreach, Natalie led the creation and distribution of 25 bedrolls for community members who needed them.

To continue her project, Natalie coordinated donations of plastic bags from Harvesters, a local food pantry, and taught volunteers at Cross-Lines how to crochet the bedrolls. Each season, new bedrolls will be made and distributed to homeless community members or saved for the colder winter months as an additional form of assistance.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I can and I will.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Olivia Messina**

Kansas City, MO



## Equality Event

Olivia has been a Girl Scout for 11 years as part of Troop 52 in Service Unit 611. She is currently a junior at Liberty High School. She has future plans to attend the University of Missouri-Kansas City and pursue her medical degree.

When reviewing her school's annual survey, Olivia noticed a reported decrease in the "sense of belonging" by her classmates. Her project focuses on making others feel included by creating an Equality Event, a safe space for students to come as they are, make friends, and belong to the school community. She worked alongside diverse groups at her school including the Asian and Pacific Islander Club, the Mental Health Awareness Group, and the Gender and Sexuality Awareness Group to build a new type of gathering focused on equality and inclusion.

The Equality Event at Liberty High School will continue on thanks to the support of the various clubs and organizations that worked with Olivia. This safe space is sure to create a sense of belonging for many students for years to come!

**Because of Girl Scouts...I have had opportunities I wouldn't have otherwise had and I feel confident in who I am and know that I have the ability to make a real world difference.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Evelyn Miller**

Kansas City, MO



## Opera To Go

Evelyn Miller has been a Girl Scout as part of Troop 5003 in Service Unit 606. She is currently a freshman at the University of Missouri, where she is double majoring in Music Education and Vocal Performance.

For her Gold Award project, Evelyn used opera music to address the stigma around mental illness. Working alongside Lyric Opera of Kansas City's Opera to Go program, Evelyn organized community performances that also included a presentation on how music can benefit both mental and physical health.

As Lyric Opera continues the Opera To Go program, they will continue to include Evelyn's information on the benefits of music, ensuring that patrons learn about how to improve their own health for years to come!



**Because of Girl Scouts...I became who I am today.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Thea Minshall**

Harrisonville, MO



## Reconstruction

Thea Minshall was a Girl Scout for 13 years in Troop 887 in Service Unit 654. She recently graduated from Raymore-Peculiar High School and is pursuing her real estate license.

Thea's Gold Award project focuses on renovating an outdoor seating area at Peculiar United Methodist Church to make it safe and accessible for elderly parishioners and community organizations that also utilize the space. She learned construction techniques to build the benches using long-lasting concrete and cedar wood and remove the old benches and before levelling the area with rocks and gravel. Keeping in mind the need for a safe space for everyone, Thea created a beautiful new outdoor seating and a fire pit for the community.

Thea made sure to focus on using sustainable, long-lasting material for her project so it will serve the church for many years. Her benches have already become a staple of the church community and will be further enjoyed by church members, community groups, and more.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have been able to have friendships that will last forever, I am have the opportunity to learn and see a lot of different things, and I am proud to called myself a Girl Scout**





# Celebrate Gold

## Markie Nava

Blue Springs, MO

### Grown Veggies on the Farm

Markie Nava has been a Girl Scout for 5 years in Troop 1472 in Service Unit 647. She will be a senior in the fall at Blue Springs High School with plans to attend community college through the A+ scholarship program and then to UMKC for her undergraduate work. From there, Markie plans to enter medical school.

Markie's Gold Award project built a garden for Owl Hollow Farms in an effort to provide the organization with fresh fruits and vegetables. Owl Hollow Farms provides programming for young people with ADHD and other special needs, and is a place that Markie learned to ride horses and connect with others. She not only built a garden area with raised beds, but also planted tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini, carrots, radishes, pumpkins, and sunflowers. She hopes the organization will not only be able to use the produce for attendees, but also to use the garden for programming.

The creation of the garden area, along with fencing and other infrastructure will provide the organization with years of gardening opportunities. For students with a range of needs, incorporating gardening will unlock not only nutritional education, but also opportunities for learning to grow plants and connect with nature.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have learned how to kayak I have also learned how to camp outside, I have also learns how to ax throw, I have also learned how to plain an event and execute it, I went on a staycation at the Elms resort and spa . I was able to learn how to make pottery on a wheel.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Star Nedved

Platte City, MO



## Sensory Path/Mat

Star was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 377 in Service Unit 601. She is currently a sophomore at Missouri S&T, pursuing a degree in nuclear engineering.

For her Gold Award project, Star wanted to create more options for students with disabilities to regulate their sensory needs. She created a portable sensory mat and barefoot mat that could be moved to different classrooms where they are needed. Star also provided education to her peers on sensory needs by sharing content on Instagram.

Star has already heard from teachers that students are requesting the tools she provided to help them while at school. Since she gave the mats to the school, they will be able to serve students for years to come.

**Because of Girl Scouts...I have taken a lot more opportunities to help the community.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Brittany Parker**

Belton, MO



## Mental Health Awareness Event/Dinner

Brittany was a girl member for 13 years as part of Troop 112 in Service Unit 653. She recently graduated from Belton High School.

Brittany's Gold Award project identifies a need in her community for greater education on mental health resources. In order to provide information for those who need help, she hosted a community dinner where representatives from the police department and local mental health organizations spoke about resources everyone could use. Brittany also provided mental health gift bags to the attendees with resources they could take home.

The community dinner will continue on now hosted by another local Girl Scout troop continuing awareness. Brittany's project is sure to help many community members access essential mental health resources for years to come.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I am the person I am today.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Gabi Poeschl**

Overland Park, KS



## Happy Learning Kits: Addressing the Summer Slide

Gabi Poeschl has been a Girl Scout for 11 years as an Indy Girl Scout in Service Unit 675. She will be a junior in the fall at St. Thomas Aquinas High School with plans to attend law school after she graduates from college.

Gabi's Gold Award project addresses the issue of educational disparities among school aged children from low-income families over the summer months. To help combat this issue, she created over 700 "Happy Learning Kits" and delivered them to low-income students and families in Kansas City, KS. The kits were aimed at reducing the "summer slide," which is a decline in reading ability and other academic skills that can occur over the summer months when school is not in session. She included books, coloring materials, pencils, folders, flash cards, and other resources from local educational professionals in the kits to empower families to combat this loss of learning.

Through her website ([happylearningkits.org](http://happylearningkits.org)) and the delivered kits, she has been able to help change the achievement gap by providing children from low-income areas the tools/resources to be successful over the summer. In addition to the physical kits, resources are available on her website and accessible to anyone with an internet connection and can be updated in the future.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I learned that I can overcome challenges with proactive communication and recruiting the help of people within my community.**





# Celebrate Gold



**Arianna Riley**

Topeka, KS

## Young Leaders Summit

Arianna has been a girl member for 13 years in Troop 628 in Service Unit 701. She is currently a sophomore at the University of Kansas, studying early childhood education, women's studies, and Spanish. After college, she plans to attend law school and pursue a career as a Civil Rights Attorney.

Arianna's passion for leadership and development inspired her project, the Young Leaders Summit. She offered a conference for students across the community, hosted at her high school. The conference provided education on discovering leadership skills, collaborating with others, and making an impact in the community. Arianna specifically targeted students who may not have been considered for other leadership development opportunities due to a variety of factors.

The Young Leaders Summit will continue on thanks to Arianna's work with local organizations that will sponsor future workshops. Thanks to Arianna, a new generation of leaders has the tools they need to succeed and make a difference.

**Because of Girl Scouts...I was able to make a profound impact on my community and help so many people along the way.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Neha Shankar**

Overland Park, KS



## Paw Prints Nonprofit

Neha has been a Girl Scout for twelve years as part of Troop 14 in Service Unit 675. She is currently a senior at Blue Valley West High School. She plans to study Biology and pursue a pre-Dental track in college.

After adopting her senior dog from a shelter, Neha understood the severity of overcrowding in animal shelters. While most people focus on pet adoption as a solution to overcrowding, Neha wanted to address the problem of people losing their pets, which often end up in shelters until they are found. She identified microchips and GPS collars as an easy, but underutilized, solution for lost pets. Neha spoke at shelters and created pamphlets, social media accounts, and a website to share information on GPS collars and encourage pet owners to purchase one for their pets.

Neha's website and brochures will continue to be distributed by local animal shelters, as well as a dog bakery and shop to help spread the word. With Neha's project, fewer dogs will end up in shelters simply because they got lost.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have learned the importance of giving back to my community, cultivated important skills like networking and being assertive, and created connections with other Girl Scouts that will last a lifetime.**





# Celebrate Gold

## Josephine Sibert

Lee's Summit, MO



## Suzie Needs a Surgery: An Illustrated Children's Book

Josephine Sibert has been a Girl Scout for 12 years in Troop 143 in Service Unit 649. She recently graduated from Lee's Summit High School with plans to pursue a degree in English and Neuroscience on a pre-med track.

Josephine's Gold Award project focuses on easing stress and anxiety children experience before going in for surgery. She created a children's book, *Suzie Needs Surgery*, which she wrote and illustrated. The book aims to dispel fear and foster interest and excitement through education, with expertise and guidance from surgeons at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. The core idea behind the book is to create familiarization and thereby mitigate the unknown and reduce anxiety of pediatric surgery. Josephine drew on personal experiences having surgery as a child to navigate the complex emotions and provide support for other children going through the same experience.

The book will continue to be available for children across the globe – even being offered in three languages! It is available online through Barnes & Noble and will continue to be a great resource for families and medical centers around the world.

**Because of Girl Scouts...I have established life-long friendships and discovered how to become a well-rounded leader. I have also been able to participate in adventures across the country, from Surfing in California to Liberty Island in NY to backpacking across Wisconsin or canoeing across the boundary waters in Minnesota.**



# Celebrate Gold

## Madeline Souder

Warrensburg, MO

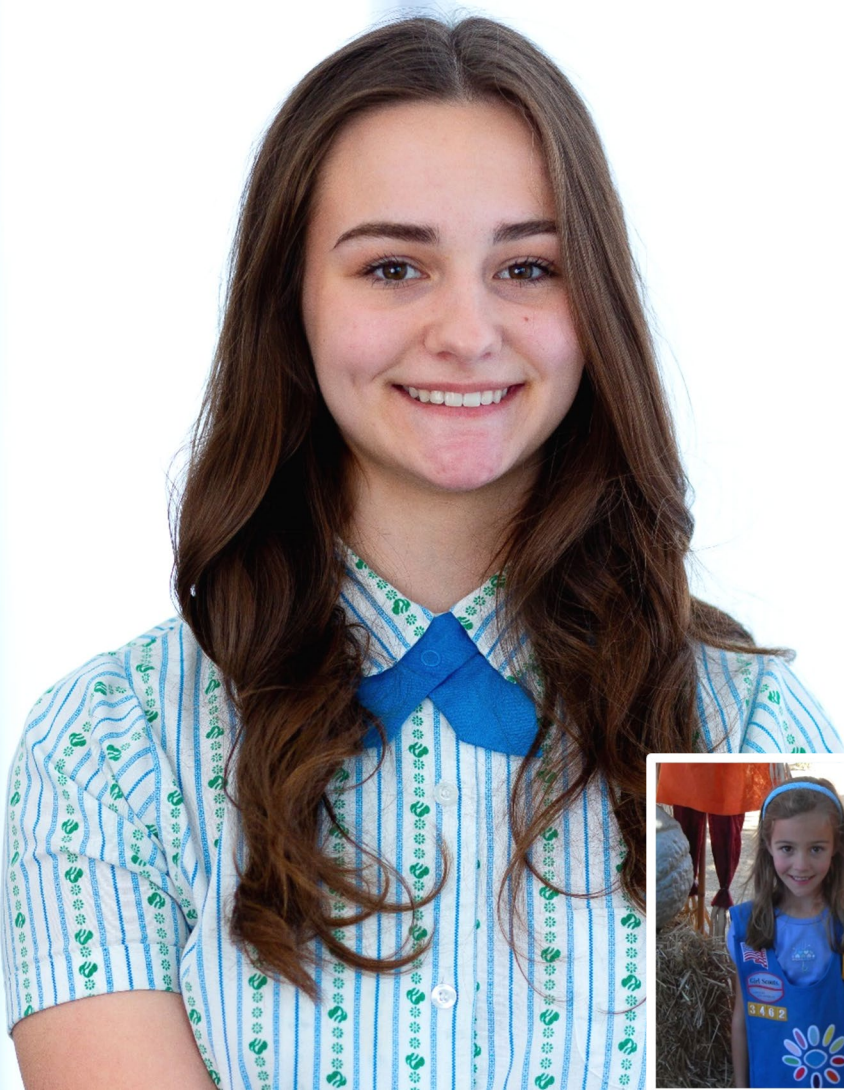


## Remembrance of Veterans

Madeline was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 99957 in Service Unit 657. She is currently a sophomore at the University of Central Missouri where she is studying Graphic Design and Illustration.

Madeline's Gold Award project was inspired by a community event held by the American Legion for Memorial Day, where volunteers place American Flags next to the graves of veterans. She noticed that it was difficult to identify which graves belonged to veterans, and that there were no dedicated holders for the flags, leading to damage so they could not be reused. Madeline built 1,000 conduit one foot long flag holders to protect the flags, and created a map of all of the headstones belonging to veterans. More than 100 volunteers attended the event to honor local veterans for Memorial Day.

To continue her project, Madeline created step-by-step instructions to build the flag holders. The American Legion and Triad AFJROTC will continue to place flag holders on veterans' graves, continuing this meaningful community tradition for years to come.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have been able to create life-long friendships, learn about and help others and my environment, gain important leadership skills, and become confident in the person I am today.**





# Celebrate Gold



**Jaylee Soule**

Overland Park, KS

## Ageless Inspiration

Jaylee was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 240 in Service Unit 675. She is attending the University of Kansas to pursue a degree in Elementary Education.

Jaylee was inspired to share kindness and community with the elderly population to make sure they did not feel forgotten by creating inspirational columns to place around Aberdeen Village, a local senior living center. She cut and sanded the wooden columns herself, then worked with a crafting group at her church and local high school students to paint inspirational art on the columns. She also held a decorating event at Aberdeen Village, where residents could paint their own columns to keep or share.

Residents at Aberdeen Village were incredibly appreciative and grateful for the columns, and excited about painting their own columns. Future outreach and inspiration to the elderly community will be continued in partnership with Jaylee's church, whose childhood craft group will share cards, crafts, and uplifting posters to remind Aberdeen Village residents that they are not forgotten.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have been given the confidence to organize and lead projects and events that bring joy to others.**



# Celebrate Gold



## Morgan Tate

Shawnee, KS

### Attend the Tale of Troupe #888

Morgan Tate was a girl member for 13 years in Troop 1494 in Service Unit 638. She is currently a sophomore at the University of Kansas, where she is studying Theatre.

Morgan's high school thespian troupe, Troupe 888, has been active for many years, but struggled to maintain historical records and updated display cases at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School. To update the records and display cases, Morgan scanned more than 4,000 photos spanning the history of Troupe 888 from 1983-2023. She also turned the display cases into a museum of Troupe history, featuring past directors and award winners.

Morgan worked alongside the Troupe 888 Historian to tackle this project, making future updates to the museum display less overwhelming for Historians to accomplish. She also trained a team on how to scan the photos for future historical record-keeping.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have built strong bonds with others and learnt so much more about the world.**





# Celebrate Gold

**Haylee Thompson**

Kansas City, MO



## Caboose Revamp

Haylee has been a Girl Scout for 11 years in Troop 592 in Service Unit 606. She is a senior at Staley High School.

Haylee's Gold Award project renovated a beloved community space at Fox Hill Elementary School, the caboose – a train car used as a learning space for students. Haylee was inspired by her own experience as an elementary school student to clean up this unique space and ensure it remained a spot that students and teachers wanted to continue using. She cleaned up leaves and debris, added mulch and new plants, and worked with the Girls on the Run team to paint inspirational rocks with uplifting words on them to be made into stepping stones for the new garden.

Haylee worked with teachers at the school to encourage children to use kind and uplifting words by continuing the rock painting project for future students. She also offered resources for school custodians to keep the space welcoming for the community based on her improvements. Thanks to Haylee, the Fox Hill Elementary Caboose remains a treasured community asset!



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have become a better leader.**



# Celebrate Gold

**Kylie Zeiler**

Topeka, KS



## Community Care Closet Refurbished

Kylie was a girl member for 13 years as part of Troop 628 in Service Unit 701. She is currently a freshman at Washburn University, studying Philosophy and Pre-Law.

Kylie's Gold Award project was inspired by her passion to help families within her high school community who struggled with access to clothes, personal hygiene products, and other necessities. When Kylie first encountered the school's Care Closet, many of the resources were unusable for students including expired food, clothing with holes in them, and disorganized school supplies. Kylie cleaned, organized, and restocked the closet with essentials for students, and worked with school counselors to share information about the resources.

The responsibility for maintaining the closet will be shared with other determined students at Shawnee Heights, who will keep it organized, clean, and restock products as necessary. They will train future classes to maintain the closet and keep these essential resources available for years to come.



**Because of Girl Scouts...I have gained a sense of independence, which has led me to open new doors to success and become a leader in my community.**