Girl Scouts of Connecticut congratulates all of our 2015 Gold Award recipients! Find out more about the girls and their projects below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samantha Barisano</th>
<th>Lauren Marion Escott</th>
<th>Erin Heneghan</th>
<th>Margaret Anne Moore</th>
<th>Lauren Rossitto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shannara Bauer</td>
<td>Kristina Esposito</td>
<td>Christine Hill</td>
<td>Heather Morey</td>
<td>Megan Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anika Berger</td>
<td>Emma Finegan</td>
<td>Olivia Hollyer</td>
<td>Catie Morgan</td>
<td>Paige Santiago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia Bowden</td>
<td>Casey Ford</td>
<td>Nicole Honeysett</td>
<td>Abigail Morley</td>
<td>Ahana Shanbhogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Browne</td>
<td>Malaina Foss</td>
<td>Alexa Iadarola</td>
<td>Danielle Charlotte-Rose Morrill</td>
<td>Kayla Sica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian Buckley</td>
<td>Natalie Gallo</td>
<td>Jenna Iadarola</td>
<td>Jennifer Newton</td>
<td>Kiran Singh-Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subhatra Chelladurai</td>
<td>Kennedy Gibson</td>
<td>Kelly Janasek</td>
<td>Hannah Paquette</td>
<td>Bridget Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Cole</td>
<td>Marisa Goff</td>
<td>Claire MacMillan</td>
<td>Emma Pendl-Robinson</td>
<td>Isabel Stoddart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helene Renee Collins</td>
<td>Emma Gosden</td>
<td>Samantha Marinelli</td>
<td>Felicity Petruzzi</td>
<td>Gemma Dominique Tebbutt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Costello</td>
<td>Lauren Guiry</td>
<td>Andrea McGowan</td>
<td>Meaghan Reilly</td>
<td>Kaitlyn Webb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline English</td>
<td>Kate Halabi</td>
<td>Lindsey Meyers</td>
<td>Emily Rizza</td>
<td>Sasha Yazdzik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Samantha Barisano  
Vernon  
Samantha educated students and staff at her high school about the benefits of composting, eventually expanding to the entire Vernon/Manchester community. Because of her efforts, a permanent compost program will be set in place to further educate her town on the importance of recycling food waste. At her high school, Samantha’s materials will be used in future environmental science classes, and the kitchen staff will waste less and place recycle containers in the cafeteria. Samantha plans to study either marine science or forensic science after she graduates.

Shannara Bauer  
Bethlehem  
Shannara inspired younger students at her local elementary school to embrace the power of reading. Shannara went around her town and collected and donated 750 books to the library. She organized books by reading level, read to local children, and developed a community-wide “reading camp.” Because of her project, her high school’s National Honor Society will collect more books and continue to read to students. Shannara currently attends Goucher College in Baltimore for a career in dance therapy or neuropsychology.

Anika Berger  
Sherman  
When Anika noticed that residents in Sherman were unable to access information on an authentic blacksmith’s forge from 1870, she took action. Anika reached out to the Gaylordsville Historical Society and received its permission to create museum-style plaques and pedestals to provide information on various tools in the forge. Anika’s project was well-received by the Gaylordsville Historical Society, and it agreed to take responsibility for the forge’s maintenance. Anika plans to study international development and social change to have a future career in international relations.

Acacia Bowden  
Deep River  
Acacia’s project focused on “Girls and Education.” It included creating an after-school Girls in Engineering class at local elementary schools for second to fourth grade girls. Acacia also worked with Pratt & Whitney engineers to develop the class. She then organized a public screening of the international film “Girl Rising,” which highlights girls around the world who fought against the odds to get an education, and secured the film for the VRHS library. Her engineering program will also continue to be run by educators in Deep River. Acacia plans to become a physician’s assistant after she graduates.
Elizabeth Browne  
*Ridgefield*

Elizabeth’s Gold Award Project, “Dyslexia Awareness,” had three goals: raise awareness of learning disabilities, change her community’s views about learning disabilities, and let future generations know that they have every chance to succeed. Elizabeth compiled her extensive research into binders and distributed pamphlets, a PowerPoint, and book lists to various locations throughout town, including the library. Elizabeth will be attending Assumption College in Worcester, MA, this fall to study Elementary Education with a concentration in classics.

Jillian Buckley  
*Middlebury*

Jillian created an easier way for organizations across the state to collect non-perishable food donations with her project, “Building Boxes for Food.” After realizing that her local food bank needed help, Jillian and her team built wooden boxes and placed them in prominent places around town to make donating easier and raise awareness about the importance of giving. Jillian’s wooden donation boxes will be used to collect food in the future and will be monitored by the Junior Women’s Club. After her project, Jillian learned that even the smallest contributions can make a difference.

Subhatra Chelladurai  
*Brookfield*

Subhatra created a self-defense program for girls between the ages of 12 and 18 for her Gold Award Project, “Self Defense 101.” The classes encompassed both physical and non-physical forms of self defense. “Self Defense 101” helped girls foster a greater sense of confidence. Subhatra pieced together bits of recordings of the classes to create a basic self-defense video. Residents can access the video from the Brookfield Public Library to learn on their own. Subhatra plans to pursue a career in health sciences after graduation.

Emily Cole  
*Simsbury*

Emily created an afterschool program, “Unified Art,” at her high school to help bridge the gap between special education students and students enrolled in the standard education program. At Unified Art, students with or without special needs gathered to spend time together and create artwork in a judgment-free environment. Unified Art will continue next year with five new student leaders and a new faculty advisor. Emily plans to study women and gender and communications and wants to pursue a career in public relations and advocate for women’s rights.
Helene Renee Collins  
Darien  
Helene spearheaded a book club for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities titled, “Book Buddies.” The book club met on a weekly basis at the local library or bookstore and read a collection of short stories. Members of the book club came from several STAR, Inc. group homes in the surrounding areas. The book club created a safe, nurturing environment for everyone who loves to read. Helene’s program expanded to her high school, Hopkins School, and members go to a book club every Monday night in Westport or Norwalk. Helene plans to study physics and other natural sciences in college. She hopes one day to go into the medical field.

Caroline Costello  
Wilton  
Caroline worked with the Connecticut Humane Society to help raise awareness about the importance for animal lovers to adopt or foster their pets. In order to make her approach effective, she created holiday-themed decorated bins and placed them in three prominent locations with flyers. Because of her project, the number of cats and dogs adopted in her area increased. Its success prompted The Connecticut Humane Society to continue the use of Caroline’s bins, and a younger Girl Scout Troop will use her bins in other areas of the state. Caroline will be attending Keene State College in New Hampshire in the fall and is considering a career in Elementary Education.

Madeline English  
Greenwich  
After learning that children lose interest in science as they grow older, Madeline created a program called, “Got Science?” for children in grades one through three at a local Boys & Girls Club. In all eight lessons, children were able to learn about a different component of science through fun and intriguing experimentations. Madeline created a website featuring all of her lesson plans and curriculum as well as links to science websites viewers could use, and posted her website on WAGGGSWorld.org. The Boys & Girls Club will continue to use Madeline’s lesson plans, experiments, and worksheets.

Lauren Marion Escott  
Hebron  
Lauren’s project, “Hospital Activity Bags,” offered a distraction for children who were waiting to be seen or waiting for a family member at the hospital. Lauren provided bags filled with different activities for different age groups to help improve the environment for children and teens. Lauren’s project saw positive feedback, and other groups plan on working with the hospital in the future to donate items to be put in the activity bags. Volunteers at the hospital also plan to continue to use the activity bags for visitors. Lauren plans to eventually earn a
marketing degree and work with non-profit organizations.

Kristina Esposito  
**Salem**  
After noticing a trend in self harm among younger students, Kristina started her program, “How to Love Yourself Inside Out!” In this program, Kristina taught seventh and eighth grade students how to prevent self harm. She created a curriculum that taught the students about self esteem and that there are other outlets for them to utilize if they are feeling down about themselves. Kristina also taught students the importance of loving themselves just the way they are – inside and out! Because of its success, Kristina’s curriculum will continue to be used at the middle school. She is currently studying Elementary Education at Concordia College in New York.

Emma Finegan  
**Weston**  
Emma organized and implemented a recycling program called, “Protect the Planet One High School at a Time,” at her high school. Emma placed bins in all of the classrooms, organized the scheduling and logistics within the building, and recruited a team to help her collect recyclables. Her project now runs in full capacity at her high school, and the recycling dumpster is always full! Emma also started a recycling club that will continue to run when she leaves next year with a new captain. Emma plans to pursue a career in biology and environmental studies.

Casey Ford  
**Shelton**  
Casey’s Gold Award Project, “The Book Nook Club,” addressed the clash between reading and technology. Her project worked towards helping younger students become more interested in reading for leisure. Casey held a book club where they read different books and discussed different topics. At the end of the project, Casey found that more students were inclined to read at home when they were bored instead of relying on technology for entertainment. The Book Nook Club will continue to run next year by underclassmen at Casey’s high school.

Malaina Foss  
**Danbury**  
Malaina’s Gold Award Project, “Intro to Signing,” helped educate elementary students about the deaf community by teaching them basic sign language. Malaina, whose sister is deaf, also met with her own instructor to learn more sign language. At the end of the program, Malaina held a large event where all the grades met with her sister
and presented their skills to parents and guests. The book that Malaina created will be available at the elementary school’s library for the use of generations to come. Malaina plans to earn a degree in art therapy and psychology at Southern Connecticut State University.

Natalie Gallo  
Farmington
Natalie spearheaded four different STEM-related club meetings in order to empower young girls and introduce them to STEM fields. In each meeting, Natalie taught the girls how to conduct two different experiments and help them get excited about science. Natalie’s project helped raise awareness in her community about the divide between men and women in STEM fields. Because of her project’s success, her local library decided to run Natalie’s clubs again next year to inspire young girls. Natalie plans to pursue a career in the STEM field after she graduates.

Kennedy Gibson  
Southbury
Kennedy created an online portal with bible study curriculum for children with disabilities within and outside of her parish. With her project, “Happy Hearts Bible Study,” Kennedy’s goal was to establish a program that simplified well known, but abstract Christian ideas for children with disabilities. Kennedy’s online portal will continue to exist, and will be updated with additional lesson plans and bible studies by the parish. Kennedy is currently studying computer science and business at Boston College on an Air Force ROTC scholarship. She will be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force after graduation.

Marisa Goff  
Greenwich
In order to raise awareness of marine science education, Marisa created educational resources in both English and Spanish for children ages 3-13 to encourage interest in marine biology and conservation. Marisa placed self-sustaining letter boxes and geocaches at Greenwich Point Park, and created activity kits for students to use throughout a local museum. She also trained students from her high school to continue informational “Beach Treks” for elementary and middle school-aged students. Marisa is majoring in microbiology at UCLA and hopes to pursue a career in life science research or international relations.

Emma Gosden  
Wilton
Emma’s Gold Award Project, “History for Kids,” provided educational resources
for younger students to use while they were visiting the Wilton Historical Society. In order to ease the learning process, Emma created a photo scavenger hunt for children between the ages four and eight and an activity booklet for students between the ages eight and 12. Because of its success, the Wilton Historical Society will continue to use these resources with its visitors. Emma will attend Western Connecticut State University in the fall to pursue a career in early childhood education.

Lauren Guiry
Danbury
Lauren kick-started a healthy eating and physical fitness campaign, “Stay Fit, Danbury!” to help her town foster healthy lifestyle practices. Held at her local middle school for over a one-year span, Lauren’s Gold Award Project helped students gain a positive outlook on healthier snack options, after-school activities, exercising, and more. A gym teacher at the school plans to use her lesson plans and campaign materials in the future. Lauren will be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York in the fall with the hopes to pursue a career in civil and environmental engineering.

Kate Halabi
Darien
After Kate noticed that many elementary schools, especially low-income districts, lacked interesting science lessons, she decided to start her Gold Award Project, “Science in Action.” Kate went to inner-city schools and taught students between the ages of six and 10 about science through hands-on activities and demonstrations. Kate’s project is closely linked to the Authentic Science Research program at her high school, and members of the program will continue to take on the program for years to come. Kate plans to pursue a career in science.

Erin Heneghan
South Windsor
Erin taught church members and members of a residential home how to make shawls of hope for those with cancer or other terminally ill diseases, including prayer shawls for residents with Alzheimer’s disease. Erin and her troop held a knitting drive to collect supplies, and donated the completed prayer shawls to a nursing home to provide comfort to residents. Erin left brochures with facts, instructions, and prayers, so the community can continue to create shawls. She plans on pursuing a career in nursing at Mount Saint Mary College in New York in the fall.

Christine Hill
Wallingford
Christine’s Gold Award Project, “Oakdale Woods Annual Sports Day” taught three- to 12-year-old children three different sports: tennis, basketball, and soccer using the sports facility in the neighborhood. Christine saw a 100% participant turn out and guests asked if they can make it an annual event. A mother from the neighborhood will continue to host Christine’s program next year. Christine is majoring in Child Development at Colby-Sawyer in New Hampshire. She plans on pursuing a career in physical therapy or speech pathology.

Olivia Hollyer
Weston
Olivia focused on connecting her present community to its past history using her town’s historic Hurlbutt Street Schoolhouse. Her project, “Bringing the 19th Century to the 21st Century,” highlighted the schoolhouse and its history. Olivia created a website for the schoolhouse as well as publicity for its open house. A member of the schoolhouse board will continue to keep Olivia’s website running and updated, and her signs will continue to be used to advertise the schoolhouse. Olivia plans to pursue a career in medicine, biology, or environmental science.

Nicole Honeysett
Watertown
Nicole addressed the lack of fire safety in her town with her Gold Award Project, “Fire Safety Decal.” Nicole met with her town’s Chief Firefighter and created decals to help firefighters and homeowners feel safe in cases of emergency. Nicole’s decals and brochures were distributed among her community and received great feedback. The town’s Fire Marshall will continue to distribute Nicole’s decals and brochures to other firefighters and residents throughout the community. Nicole is interested in pursuing a career in genetic research and microbiology.

Alexa Iadarola
New Fairfield
Alexa started a debate club at her local middle school in order to help seventh grade students become aware, global citizens. Alexa created a weekly curriculum for students to study. At the end of the semester, students in the program participated in a debate in front of parents, teachers, future teachers, school administrators, and a camera crew. The debate club will continue to run and open its doors to sixth and eighth grade students in the middle school. Alexa plans to study international relations and global development to eventually pursue a career in the Foreign Service.

Jenna Iadarola
New Fairfield
Jenna’s Gold Award Project, “New Fairfield Farmer’s Market,” addressed the need for local, sustainable growth in a community of industrialized farming. Jenna brought farmers to a local market to encourage residents to improve their own diets as well as support their local farmers. Jenna’s project saw positive turnout, and the market vendors formed a coalition to go to the market every week to sell their items and provide the town with fresh produce. Jenna will attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts to study chemical engineering.

Kelly Janasek
Ridgefield
Kelly addressed the issue of childhood obesity with her Gold Award Project, “Exercise Program for Danbury Grassroots Tennis and Enrichment.” In order to help promote their health and boost their self-esteem, Kelly taught the children exercise routines and provided them with logs where they could track their progress. Kelly also made presentations about her project to her local high school’s tennis teams. The director at Danbury Grassroots also plans on continuing the program in the fall with the help of the academy volunteers and Kelly. Kelly currently attends Miami University of Ohio.

Claire MacMillan
Ridgefield
Claire’s project consisted of an educational event to help raise awareness of military affairs in her community. Claire created nine stations equipped with brochures and posters for guests to visit and write letters to troops. Claire’s brochures and posters can be found at local military museums, the American Legion, and the Recreation Center. Claire will attend The College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts in the fall to pursue a career in the health field.

Samantha Marinelli
Hebron
Samantha created a presentation raising awareness on the topic of suicide among young teens. The presentation, which was used in sophomore health classes, looked at topics including signs of suicidal thinking, ways to get help for themselves or others, and that suicide can be completely preventable. Samantha’s presentation will continue to be used after she graduates to provide students with the tools they need to prevent suicide in the future. Samantha plans to study international relations with a Spanish language minor. She hopes to work in a non-profit organization that will help benefit people worldwide.

Andrea McGowan
Redding
Andrea's Gold Award Project, “Ceramic Clayground,” sought to provide artistic outlets for first and second grade students at her local elementary school. With the additional help of high school mentors, 29 elementary school students, some with disabilities, were able to create their own ceramic pieces of art. A ceramic piece created by the entire class is now on display at the elementary school. An art teacher from the elementary school will continue to lead Ceramic Clayground, and try to also include high school students. Andrea plans to become a speech therapist, double majoring in neuroscience and linguistics.

Lindsey Meyers
Fairfield
Lindsey's project, “Kindness Counts,” encouraged children in town to create kindness-inspired artwork. The artwork was displayed in the windows of shops downtown to spread the message of kindness and eliminate any negative behavior toward one another. Lindsey's project will continue after she graduates by a local Boys & Girls Club, which will host an annual seminar to be run by high school volunteers. Lindsey will attend the University of Notre Dame where she plans to study visual communications. Lindsey hopes to pursue a career involving marketing, advertising, and art.

Margaret Anne Moore
Middlebury
Margaret’s Gold Award Project, “The Yes You Can Movement,” was designed to inspire individuals to chase their dreams regardless of any obstacles. Her movement began as a presentation at her high school and a conference hosted by Salve Regina University. Her presentation showed examples of famous figures and local individuals who have overcome obstacles to change the world for the better. Margaret’s presentation can be found on YouTube. Margaret will attend Fairfield University in the fall to pursue a career in creative writing. She hopes to become a successful author.

Heather Morey
Brookfield
Heather worked with a team of individuals in restoring and rejuvenating the Old Bridge Bird Sanctuary in her town. Heather cleaned the park, put together bird houses, made benches, put a new sign in the kiosk, remarked and metered the trails, and rebuilt the fire pit. When the park was completed, she led a Girl Scout hike and organized an “Open Park Day,” which helped raise awareness among the community about the park, along with scavenger hunts, games, and crafts. The Brookfield Parks and Recreation with continue to maintain the park for the community.

Catie Morgan
Catie planted a native garden at her town’s Community Center’s Bird Sanctuary with over 300 perennials, shrubs, ferns, and trees that birds and local wildlife need in order to survive. She also created an “I Spy” game, brochure, and Girl Scout patch program that taught girls about the dangers of invasive plants and the benefits of native plants. Two local organizations will continue to weed, mulch, water, and add plants as needed for the garden to thrive. Catie plans to further her passion for animals and plants by studying science and veterinary care.

Abigail's Gold Award Project, “Nature Therapy,” provided a series of nature-filled activities for patients at a mental health hospital to help reduce anxiety. Abigail created a book filled with information on stress relief, findings from studies, and a list of activities and instruction individuals can participate in. Abigail's book, as well as materials needed to carry out the activities in the future, has been left at the hospital. The nurses and staff plan to continue to use these activities in the future. Abigail plans to study either medicine, biology, or art.

For her Gold Award Project, Danielle taught elementary school students about fire safety. In the program, which also included a video, students learned about fire safety rules, safe places, and how to stay safe during a fire. Her full program packet is available at the elementary school, and with Danbury’s Fire Marshal, for anyone’s use. Danielle also painted Fire Exit character wall murals in local schools so younger students can refer to them all year long. Danielle currently attends Western Connecticut State University studying art. She plans to pursue a career in animation.

Jennifer’s Gold Award Project, “Latin is Alive Everywhere,” provided incoming freshmen at her high school with information about the benefits of learning the Latin language. Jennifer created a Latin Club, recruited tutors, and created a display board of information for parents to learn more about Latin at open houses. Her project resulted in an increase in enrollment in Latin courses at her high school. The Latin Honor Society will continue to run the Latin Club after Jennifer graduates. Her display board will remain with the Latin department at her school for future use. Jennifer plans to study mechanical engineering.

Hannah Paquette
Marlborough
Hannah held a town-wide 5k and information fair in order to raise awareness on several different types of cancer including melanoma, leukemia, breast, ovarian, and brain cancer. The information fair also had tables with information about support groups, prevention and awareness, and a table to decorate bags to donate to cancer patients. Hannah’s materials will continue to be used by her service unit for future information fairs and other events to raise awareness. She is also creating an “Awareness Event” journal for her Service Unit to use in the future. Hannah is studying social work at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Emma Pendl-Robinson
Branford
Emma’s Gold Award Project helped middle school students become more interested in pursuing a career in STEM. Emma created a math club at her local middle school where she promoted critical and higher-order thinking through different applications of math in and out of the classroom. The club met once a week where they participated in fun math activities that promoted teamwork and problem solving. During her project, Emma kept a journal about strengths, weaknesses, and instructions and lesson plans for the future. Next year, members of the math club will continue to reach out to middle school students and encourage them to get involved in math.

Felicity Petruzzi
Woodbury
In order to help younger students avoid the “summer slide,” Felicity volunteered at a local Children’s Community School for her Gold Award Project, “Love to Learn.” Felicity started a reading group during the school day, and led an afterschool writing workshop to keep students interested in learning. Felicity created a daily blog about her experience and at end of the program left a binder filled with lesson plans for students wishing to start their own book club or writing club. Felicity plans to pursue a career in education.

Meaghan Reilly
Sherman
After noticing that some elementary students do not complete their summer reading assignments, Meaghan worked with students in grades two and four with their summer reading packets in order to stress the importance of reading. For her Gold Award Project, “Let’s Read,” Meaghan read books with the students and created crafts to go along with the subjects. Meaghan also created a curriculum to help parents and adults encourage young students to read, which is located at her public library. Meaghan’s pamphlets and book recommendation lists will also be available at the library.
Emily Rizza  
**South Windsor**  
Emily created a website and Pinterest account that aimed to educate middle school girls at the local and national level about maintaining a high self-esteem. Emily’s Gold Award Project consisted of two workshops that addressed health, hygiene, and the media in relation to how girls can perceive themselves. She brought in yoga instructors, beauty artists, and media experts to help educate. Emily’s website is still running and available for girls to use to find resources and comfort with one another. Emily is planning to study both elementary education and school counseling in college.

Lauren Rossitto  
**Farmington**  
Lauren’s Gold Award Project, “Family Math Nights,” was aimed towards building confidence in elementary school students with mathematics. During the math nights, elementary school students were able to play games that Lauren created. Students were also given the opportunity to create their own board games to take home and maintain an interest in math. Lauren has provided the school’s Parent Teacher Organization with the materials and instructions needed to recreate Family Math Nights in the future. Lauren plans to pursue a career in elementary education after she graduates.

Megan Ryan  
**Essex**  
Megan implemented an instructional sailing program for women in her town at a local yacht club. Over the summer, Megan taught sailing lessons, water instruction, and ran two regattas with a group of women. Her Gold Award Project, “Women’s Sailing,” had 30 participants, and helped increase their skills and confidence in sailing and competition. The group did so well that they will be able to instruct novice sailors next summer. Megan also implemented the first Women’s Sailing Regatta, which the group will host next year. She also created videos and manuals for her students now and into the future. Megan plans on pursuing a future in engineering.

Paige Santiago  
**Ridgefield**  
Paige’s Gold Award Project, “Runner’s Workshop,” helped middle school students interested in running learn more about proper diet and stretching. With
her project, Paige hoped that she could provide information to middle school students so that they can avoid injuries in the future. Paige worked with an individual track team of 50 members and shared advice on the importance of stretching before and after running, hydration, and healthy lifestyle. Paige gave handouts to all of the students, as well as the coaches, for them to use throughout the season. Paige hopes to pursue a career in business.

**Ahana Shanbhogue**  
**Greenwich**
Ahana organized a hands-on summer program introducing kids of all ages to environmental issues that the world is facing, and what they can do to help. Her Gold Award Project, “Environmental Education” provided kids at her local Boys & Girls Club activities including creating trails, planting trees, and playing water-saving games. The outdoor coordinator at the Boys & Girls Club will continue to run the program in the future. Ahana is studying chemical engineering at the University of Michigan. She hopes to one day work on a team and help create alternative fuels.

**Kayla Sica**  
**Southington**
Kayla’s Gold Award Project, “Success at the Dog Pound,” worked toward improving and raising awareness of her local pound. Kayla created new signs, brochures, magnets, a donation box, a YouTube video, and ran an event to help better the lives of animals and those seeking to help them. Because of her efforts, donations to the pound have increased immensely. The brochures and magnets that Kayla created are still given out at the pound and at local vet offices, and her signs and donation boxes are permanent. Kayla’s project also inspired a local Girl Scout troop to continue another project for the pound. Kayla plans to pursue a career in child psychology after graduating.

**Kiran Singh-Smith**  
**Ridgefield**
Kiran’s Gold Award Project, “Debiasing Day - Bridging the Gap,” taught middle school students from two different towns about implicit bias. Kiran taught her students about unconscious prejudices and stereotypes and its negative effects through an educational PowerPoint and a series of fun, team-building activities. Kiran’s project has become a part of her local middle school’s peer group curriculum. Every spring, educators from her town will work with educators from the partnering town to put on the program. Kiran is pursuing a career involving social or environmental issues.

**Bridget Smith**  
**Stamford**
After learning that many families aren’t prepared for disasters, Bridget created a
hands-on, interactive exhibit at a children’s museum. The exhibit consisted of four stations that featured personal preparedness kits, family preparedness kits, family meeting places, and online resources for emergency preparedness. Bridget also created a scavenger hunt and an interactive board game for kids, and invited the American Red Cross to conduct a Pillowcase Project workshop. Bridget’s exhibit will continue to be displayed at the museum with training manuals for volunteers to use. Bridget plans to pursue a career in animation and digital media.

Isabel Stoddart  
Ridgefield
Isabel worked with third graders in a neighboring town with the goal to tutor and encourage students to get excited about STEM. Isabel and her students played multiplication-gear ed math games, board games, and card games to work towards enhancing their team-building and problem-solving skills. The project ended with a family math night where the students and their parents were able to play the games together. Isabel’s local school will continue to host annual family math game nights and host a math club after school. Isabel plans to study mathematics and pursue a career in business.

Gemma Dominique Tebbutt  
Ridgefield
Gemma’s Gold Award Project, “Transitioning Special Ed Children,” focused on helping special needs students acclimate to a new school through a series of programs, games, and tips. Gemma developed two programs for high-functioning and low-functioning special education students including a custom-made directory and coloring book of the school. Her project was such a success that three additional schools plan on adopting her program for its students. Gemma plans to pursue a career in animation and teach English in Japan after she graduates.

Kaitlyn Webb  
New Fairfield
Kaitlyn encouraged her community to get outdoors with her Gold Award Project, “Help Hahlawah!” For her project, Kaitlyn informed her community about open space in their neighborhood, helped clean up nearby trails, and ran a pond exploration program where children learned about pond creatures and layers of the forest. Kaitlyn provided the curriculum of her program to a nearby Troop Leader who plans on running it next year. Kaitlyn’s local Land Trust has also agreed to keep the trails clear and make sure that it stays public for the community’s enjoyment. Kaitlyn is majoring in culinary arts at Johnson & Wales University.

Sasha Yazdzik
Rocky Hill

Sasha’s Gold Award Project addressed the need to provide safe and enjoyable environments to campers attending the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford, CT. Sasha lined the path from the campsite to the river with pressure-treated wood and redesigned the fire pit. She provided more seating and decreased the fire pit size to control the possibility of a bonfire. Sasha’s work will be maintained by a volunteer crew that will work at the beginning of the camp season each year. The fire pit and seating are sustainable because they are made of natural materials. Sasha hopes to pursue a career in outdoor education and business.