The 2017 Girl Scout Gold Award
The Gold Award is the highest award a girl can earn in Girl Scouting. An award with national standards, it acknowledges an individual’s accomplishments, leadership, commitment, creativity, and personal effort in trying to make the world a better place. Each Gold Award project solves community issues and improves lives while girls build their personal leadership skills and inspire others to community action.

A Gold Award recipient’s accomplishments reflect leadership and citizenship skills that set her apart as a community leader. The award is a major accomplishment in a girl’s life and an extension and compilation of all that she has learned through her Girl Scout experience.

The Girl Scout Gold Award recognizes that for girls to become leaders they need to become knowledgeable, involved, and proactive. They need to lead the way.

**Discover**—Girls understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world;

**Connect**—Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally;

**Take Action**—Girls act to make the world a better place.

Above all else, the achievement of the Gold Award makes a girl understand what a difference one person can make, what one girl in a leadership role can do, and how one person’s vision can inspire positive change.

*Congratulations to this year’s Gold Award recipients*
Rebecca Abramson
SOMERS

Rebecca created a program called “Student to Student STEM” where high school students taught middle school students hands-on activities revolving around STEM. Rebecca hopes her club will inspire all of the students who participated to be passionate about STEM. Not only did the younger students learn about an exciting subject, high school students also gained leadership skills. Rebecca’s technical advisor and her Chemistry Club at her high school will continue her program when she graduates.

Lauren Ahern
RIDGEFIELD

For her Gold Award project, Lauren started a club at her high school where students met monthly with comfort dogs and discussed how they can reach out and comfort others in their community. Lauren and her group painted plaques with positive messages and delivered them in person to those in need of encouragement in their town, and organized workshops where the club and comfort dogs met with other organizations to spread happiness. Lauren will continue to run her club during her last year of high school. Her club is getting national attention and serves as a model for other comfort clubs throughout the country.

Rachel Altamirano
WATERTOWN

In order to avoid the “summer slide,” Rachel implemented a free summer reading camp at her local library where she helped first through third-graders in her town read books and be confident in their reading skills before returning to school in the fall. Rachel also collected books at her church to donate to a literacy group in a nearby town to support children who want to read, but do not have the resources. Rachel’s summer reading camp will continue to run thanks to a binder she compiled filled with research, creative games, and activities.

Garavi Angreji
WILTON

After extensive research, Garavi addressed the gender gap in the interest of STEM by spearheading and implementing technology classes where children between the ages 7-11 improved their technology skills. Garavi encouraged girls in the group to consider pursuing careers in STEM fields. The India Cultural Center in Greenwich will continue to host Garavi’s technology classes with the help of the manual she created and left behind. The teachers who participated will also continue to volunteer their time to educate and inspire the STEM leaders of tomorrow.

Isabella Alfano
FARMINGTON

Isabella created a fourth-grade book club at her local elementary school in order to help the students garner an interest in reading. She focused on two series: one chosen for boys and the other for girls. She supplied copies of the books to each classroom and the school library so that the students who were not able to participate could also read books. The students all saw an improvement in understanding as well as their reading scores. Isabella’s community consultant will continue the book club in the future. The fourth-graders also plan to run the book club for a younger grade.

Kaylin Bracey
HAMDEN

Kaylin’s Gold Award project, “The Writing Circle,” addressed the poor standardized test scores among elementary school students in her community. Kaylin noticed that younger students were not exposed to different writing styles, so she started a program to help kids discover their creative writing talents. Kaylin provided workshops on how to write fiction and poetry. “The Writing Circle” was so successful that one of the schools will continue to host the after-school program for students. Kaylin hopes the program can expand to all grade levels in the future.
After noticing that a confirmation video was outdated at her church, Erin filmed, directed, and edited a new educational video to help boost the retention rate of youth members. Erin wrote a series of questions and interviewed members of the youth group, the teen choir, and other members about the themes of service and community. Her video contained enthusiastic conversations about faith and upbeat music to boost engagement. Erin's video received positive feedback and her church’s religious department and another local church plan to show her video to every confirmation class for years to come.

For her Gold Award project, Kasandra took on the role as costume assistant at Daedream, a local theater company where she recorded, documented, and inventoried costumes and props that were needed for an upcoming production. Kasandra's goal was to leave the costume department cleaner than when she found it! To organize the department, she created her own filing system where she gathered bags, labeled the costumes, and created a manual. Kasandra's manual and system will be used by other costume assistants and volunteers for years to come.

For her Gold Award project, Reilly collaborated with a team of knitters and sewers to make and deliver blankets to children staying at a local hospital for long periods of time in order to help them feel safe and comfortable. Reilly found through research that children sometimes feel insecure when they are in unfamiliar places, so she created a blog to help raise awareness and encourage others in other parts of the country to provide the same comfort to other children. Reilly’s team of knitters and sewers will continue to make and donate blankets to hospitals in Connecticut.

Alexander addressed the issue of the rise of depression and anxiety among teens by establishing an Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) camp where teens who struggle with social interactions can learn how to care for, interact with, and ride horses. Alexandra's research showed that those who may have trouble communicating with other people can develop a sense of responsibility, confidence, and trust with an animal, and translate that success when interacting with people. The owner of the local farm where the camp was held will continue to offer her farm as a location for the camp, and members of Alexander's team will continue to be counselors for those who want to participate in the future.

Makala noticed that there was a lack of interest in American history, particularly when it comes to engagement at the Nathan Hale Homestead, a historic home and where her youth group is located. She created a manual filled with historical facts, fun and educational activities and games, field trip ideas, and more to help boost engagement and retention among her youth group and to further engage the tourists at the homestead. Makala created a website with the manual’s materials for the homestead’s use and the printed manual will live at the homestead to be used for years to come.

Charlotte’s Gold Award project “Raising Helping Hands” helped educate families about the numerous opportunities for volunteerism in her community and how to encourage their children to start volunteering at a young age. Charlotte created a website, Facebook page, and made print materials for families to use. With the help of all of her resources, Charlotte immediately saw families going out in the community and volunteering for different causes. Charlotte will continue to update her website and Facebook page with new opportunities as they arise for families to participate in.
Emma Cowles
RIDGEFIELD

Emma created and implemented vaccination kits to help pediatricians distract younger children between the ages of four and ten receiving procedural vaccinations. The kit consists of frequently asked questions, a small children's book in English and Spanish describing the benefits of getting a procedure, and a pinwheel for children to blow on during the shot. Emma distributed over 300 kits as well as instructions and digital files will remain in doctors’ offices in the area to continue the program.

Lauren Desrochers
ROXBURY

Lauren created a summer school art class to help students in her community learn how to express themselves and how to effectively manage stress caused by academics. During the art class, Lauren taught the students how to make collages, scribble doodles, create timelines of their lives, make pet rocks, and create heart diagrams of the things they love. She also created a video with the students and teachers explaining why art education is so important. Lauren’s lesson plans and art activity book will be continued to be used at summer school in the future.

2017 GOLD AWARD WINNERS

Danielle Dixon
GLASTONBURY

For her Gold Award project, “Math Path to Improvement,” Danielle created fun lessons and games to help a class of fourth-grade students in her town learn and retain basic knowledge in addition, subtraction, and multiplication. Danielle’s goal was for the class to score an 80% or above on their quiz after weeks of practice through fun mathematical games. Danielle saw that the students retained the information, and her games and instructions were left behind at the school for other classes to utilize. Danielle believes this basic retention in math will help the students score better on future tests and help them secure better futures.

Kayla Downs
BROOKFIELD

Kayla’s project addressed the lack of science-based after-school activities. Kayla spearheaded a club at her school for students interested in science and introduced them to different careers that they may have not considered or knew about. During their meetings, Kayla invited professionals in different science fields to come in and share information about their careers. Kayla promoted her new club through flyers, social media, and an email marketing campaign. Kayla’s club will continue to run for a second year and will receive new leaders when she graduates.

Kaitlyn Drysdale
BROOKFIELD

Kaitlyn organized a group of student volunteers to visit a local assisted living facility to bring comfort and companionship to the residents who lived there by socializing and playing games. Kaitlyn also organized a large “prom” event for the entire group to attend. Both the students and the residents saw benefits from the project. A club at Kaitlyn’s school will continue to organize times to visit the assisted living facility and continue to establish close relationships across generations.

Genna Duff
TOLLAND

Genna noticed that her CCD classrooms were bare and dull, so for her Gold Award project, she and children from the church decorated the classrooms to make them more inspirational and educational. She hoped to help the children from the church feel more involved and also lighten the load for the volunteer teachers. She also created and provided first-day packets and materials filled with fun activities and ice breakers for the teachers to use. The children will redecorate the classrooms each year and the teachers will continue to use Genna’s packets to boost student engagement in the future.

Lauren created a summer school art class to help students in her community learn how to express themselves and how to effectively manage stress caused by academics. During the art class, Lauren taught the students how to make collages, scribble doodles, create timelines of their lives, make pet rocks, and create heart diagrams of the things they love. She also created a video with the students and teachers explaining why art education is so important. Lauren’s lesson plans and art activity book will be continued to be used at summer school in the future.

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For her Gold Award project, Ameesha tackled the global issue concerning quality education for girls in developing countries. She traveled to India and spoke with girls at a village school in Alwar, Rajasthan about the resources they need, founded a Girls Learn International Chapter in town, and held two events where she showed the film *Girls Rising* and brainstormed ways to help support the construction of the infrastructure of a school in India. Ameesha is still in contact with the girls from the village school and will continue to visit them. The Girls Learn International Chapter at Ameesha’s school continues to run under new leadership.

Brooke addressed the issue of distracted driving among teens, particularly texting and driving. Her goal was to shine light on how dangerous it is to text and drive, and how you’re not only putting your life at risk, but those around you as well. Brooke presented this topic to her senior class and even extended her presentation to adults and teens in surrounding communities. She created a website that she will continue to update with statistics and facts and also created business cards for friends, family, and local businesses to pass around to spread the word to stay safe on the roads.

Paige spearheaded a literature club at her local library where high school students could come together to discuss literature in an educational and social environment outside of school. With her club, “Teen Critics Club,” Paige hoped her fellow students would be inspired to read more books and find their passion in literature. In order to recruit, Paige created flyers and posters and hung them at her local library to encourage more high school-aged students to become more engaged in literature. Paige’s club will continue to be run by other high school students when she graduates.

Shannon noticed that there was a lack of programming in middle school regarding drug and alcohol prevention, so she started her own after-school program for sixth-graders in her town. Shannon created her own curriculum and used fun instructive activities including games, videos, articles, and created posters to educate students on the negative effects of drug use and to encourage them to share the information and materials with their friends. Shannon’s program continues to run at the local middle school with the support of two trained advisors and the middle school principal.

Katie addressed the concern of low literacy rates among elementary school children in her town. Because there was a connection between low literacy rates and low-income families, Katie created seven miniature libraries at her local human services building offering free books to families to take home. With the help of her “book nooks,” families who visited the facility were able to have access to free books for all ages. The Groton Education Association will continue to run Katie’s project and host a biannual collection to ensure that children in the community continue to have the ability to boost their literacy skills.

Siobhan’s Gold Award project, “Recycling and Composting at MES and Beyond,” addressed the lack of recycling and compost awareness at her local elementary school. Siobhan taught fifth-graders about the benefits of composting and recycling during Earth Week, where she collected compost from the elementary school’s cafeteria and brought it to a local senior center to be used for their vegetable garden. Siobhan created a website detailing her project and fun facts about composting and recycling and how anyone can create a recycling area in their own home. Siobhan’s students will continue to spread the word about the benefits of composting and recycling and Siobhan will continue to donate compost to the senior center.
To offer first responders an easy map to navigate her high school in case of an emergency, Kaleigh developed and implemented a navigation system. She painted different colors throughout the school, categorizing the hallways by floor level and section. She also strategically placed arrows in stairwells and posted numbers at doors to help emergency responders navigate the school with ease. Her school will continue to use her system with the help of sustainable color coding paint, and the first responders will continue to train new staff on the navigation system.

For her Gold Award project, Danielle and volunteers from her high school met with senior citizens at her local senior center to offer companionship and to record their stories. Danielle found that there are many seniors who have great stories to share, but no one to tell them to. After talking with the seniors and recording their stories, Danielle created a large book filled with memories and stories. Copies of the book will be kept at the senior center and the town library so individuals of all generations in her community can read and learn the stories of those in their town.

Catarina tackled the technology gap among senior citizens by implementing individualized tutoring sessions at her local senior center. Catarina and a group of volunteer tutors sat down with residents at the senior center and helped them with specific issues they had when it came to using their own devices. Catarina made binders with information packets for the seniors to follow and also put that information and other materials on her own website. Catarina’s binders will continue to be updated by volunteers at her high school and local Girl Scouts who will both continue to hold tutoring sessions at the senior center.

In order to address the lack of resources for underprivileged students who want to participate in the music program at her high school, Ashley kick-started an instrument drive where she collected instruments for students who could not afford to rent or buy instruments. She also hosted a summer band camp where she and other instrument section volunteers taught younger students new skills playing the instrument of their choice. Ashley’s summer band camp will continue to run in the future under new management.

For her Gold Award project, Calista helped build childrens’ self confidence through her project, “Kidprov.” Through the use of different acting games and techniques, Calista was able to guide first through sixth-grade children in her community by teaching them to appreciate themselves while having fun. She created a Facebook page to recruit volunteers and promote performances. Through the help of her local Parks and Recreation Department, volunteers at her local high school will continue to run Kidprov as a six-week acting camp to inspire children of the future.

Kimberly’s Gold Award project focused on improving the emotional health among seventh-graders by meeting with them once a month and teaching them how to deal with bullying, cliques, and other common issues affecting students in middle school. Kimberly created lesson plans about emotional self awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and stress management. Kimberly had the students come up and act out scenarios, engaged them in conversation, and had them talk in small groups about specific topics. Kimberly’s binder with her lesson plans will continue to be used at the middle school.
2017 Gold Awardees

Lily Harwood
WESTON

Lily's Gold Award project, “Physics It Out,” taught middle school students about the importance of science in their everyday lives. Lily's goal was to convince the students that science is not just a topic in a book — it is an important subject with real-world applications. Lily developed a lab and presentation which involved motion detectors to measure the velocities of mini-cars and showcase the law of conservation and momentum in action. Due to positive feedback from both the middle school students and teachers, the lab project is now incorporated into the eighth-grade science curriculum.

Kathleen Hazzard
NEWTOWN

For her Gold Award project, “Stress Less,” Kathleen helped incoming high school freshmen prepare for their next year by hosting stress management sessions for eighth-grade students. Kathleen noticed that there were few resources regarding stress management, so she created a quick tip flyer and a Facebook page providing tips, tricks, and personal stories on how to manage stress. Kathleen's flyers now live in all of the guidance offices, and she will continue to update the Facebook page. She is also working with a local Girl Scout who might pursue the topic of stress management for her Gold Award project.

Nisha Honnaya
MONROE

Nisha addressed dementia awareness in her community by developing a program with activities for residents at her local senior residential community, providing mental stimulation and also fostering meaningful relationships across generations. Nisha and her volunteers met with senior citizens and participated in math exercises, brain teasers, and fun interactive games. They also made time to get to know each other by sharing stories and regular conversation. Nisha will continue to run the program at her local senior center until she graduates. After that, the program will be sustained by younger members.

Katie Huffert
DARIEN

For her Gold Award project, “Technology Education for Seniors,” Katie went to her local senior center and taught the residents how to use four different technological and social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube, email, and Skype. Katie wanted to help the residents there have an easier time communicating with their family and friends, so she created a binder with a toolkit and lesson plans as well as four instructional binders on each platform for the seniors to refer to. The senior center will continue to use her resources to run the program in the future.

Megan Jewell
SOMERS

For her Gold Award project, “Technology Education for Seniors,” Katie went to her local senior center and taught the residents how to use four different technological and social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube, email, and Skype. Katie wanted to help the residents there have an easier time communicating with their family and friends, so she created a binder with a toolkit and lesson plans as well as four instructional binders on each platform for the seniors to refer to. The senior center will continue to use her resources to run the program in the future.

Megan Keough
RIDGEFIELD

For her project, Megan addressed the generational gap between senior citizens and the younger generation by gathering a group of students to volunteer at her local nursing home. Megan's hope was to bring the two generations together by engaging conversation and participating in different activities. Megan went out into her community to encourage other Girl Scout troops and others in her community to visit the nursing home. Part of her project will be passed on to a local Girl Scout troop in Danbury who will continue to visit the nursing home on weekends.
Addison Kimber
SOUTH WINDSOR

With the help of the Interact Club at her high school, Addison addressed the need for positive communication outlets after tragedy hit her town. Her goal was to teach students how to make a stronger community. Addison met with elementary school students, teachers, high school students, and her Girl Scout troop where she taught ways to handle conflict and bullying, created pledge posters, played games, held discussions, and other tactics to encourage people in her community to come together and promote health and safety. Addison’s Interact Club will continue to hold the program at the elementary school and high school.

Christina Lawton
GROTON

Christina created a rosary garden at her church where people of all faiths can come together to meditate or pray. She believed that with the help of the garden, people who feel troubled can come and feel at peace despite what could be going on in their lives or in the world around them. Christina, who is a third-grade religion teacher at her church, will continue to bring her class to the garden for comfort and encourage them to pray for peace. The church is incorporating Christina’s garden into its religion program, and it will continue to maintain the garden and welcome everyone in the community to promote world peace.

Vivienne Le
DARIEN

Vivienne volunteered at her local senior living center and created a program called “Cultural Exchange” where residents were given the opportunity to explore different cultures despite the physical boundaries that they may face regarding travel. In the ten classes, Vivienne taught the residents about France and Spain by listening to lectures, eating native foods, and video chatting with people from France and Spain via Skype. Vivienne’s goal was to show the residents that it is never too late to learn a new language or a new culture. The senior center has agreed to continue to run Vivienne’s program in the future.

Michelle Legan
RIDGEFIELD

Michelle worked with a local neurologist in her town and created an activity book for residents at her local senior living center to help keep their minds active. Michelle and a group of student volunteers visited the senior living center and worked one on one with the residents, hosting game and movie nights to form positive relationships between the generations. The residents loved the activity book so much that they asked Michelle to make another. Michelle’s activity books will live at multiple doctors’ offices in her community along with a digital file on the neurologist’s website. Students from her high school also plan on continuing Michelle’s project after she graduates.

Juliette Linares
CHESTER

Juliette’s project addressed the need for families to encourage their younger children to foster a love for literature at a young age. Juliette hosted a Dr. Seuss family event where 25 families attended along with Girl Scout troops, guests from surrounding towns, two guest readers, teachers, principals, and reading specialists. Juliette will continue to host the Dr. Seuss family event until she graduates high school. She hopes that it will continue to be a success and the school will agree to make it an annual event, to inspire future generations.

Emma Lee
RIDGEFIELD

Emma spearheaded a book drive to help donate books and resources to school districts and students in Africa. Emma spread the word about how people in her community could help more students into classrooms in Africa. Emma read to second-graders about the issue, wrote and conducted a TED Talk for middle school students, and held a Skype call between students in Africa and a sixth-grade class in her town to educate them on the culture and education gaps in different countries. Emma hopes that the younger generations will spread the message with others.
Sara built an outdoor shed for the archery program at her local YMCA so they would have adequate storage space for their equipment. Her project goal was to help the instructors minimize equipment transfers and maximize class time. Sara met with the archery instructor to see how much space they needed and what she could do to help find a solution to their problem. Sara's shed is made from materials that will withstand the natural elements, and the maintenance staff will continue to touch up the paint and monitor upkeep of the shed for the future.

Mariah raised awareness in her community about the importance of adopting pets from animal shelters by creating an informative brochure to circulate around her community. Her goal was to stop the overflow of dogs in animal shelters. In order to reach a wider audience, Mariah also hung up posters and created a Facebook page which she updated with statistics, facts, and a call to action for people in her community to "Adopt, Don't Shop." Mariah's brochures will continue to be circulated throughout her community with the help of supporters in her town, and she will continue to update her Facebook page to encourage more people to adopt their pets.

Carly created a sensory garden which highlights taste, sight, touch, smell, and hearing in order to give individuals with sensory issues a place to go and relax. People who visit the garden can hear wind chimes, see butterflies, taste herbs, smell flowers, and feel the plants. Carly hopes her garden can help all individuals who need a place to put their mind at ease. Individuals in Carly's community will continue to water the garden, including a part-time gardener who will maintain the garden. A local Boy Scout troop also plans to redo the walkway and make it more inviting for a community service project.

For her Gold Award project, "West Hartford Volun-teens," Olivia provided resources to middle and high school students to help them find volunteer opportunities that matched their interests and age group. Olivia hoped that the students would be inspired to go out into the community and learn the importance of civic engagement. Along with compiling a directory of organizations for which the students could volunteer, Olivia also spearheaded and held a volunteer fair with representatives from 25 agencies recruiting young volunteers. Olivia's directory has been dispensed to public schools in her town and surrounding towns, and there are plans to continue the volunteer fair for years to come.

Michelle tackled the issue of domestic violence in society by creating an awareness event at the Olympic Taekwondo Academy in her town where attendees learned self defense. She collected a set of materials for the Prudence Crandall Center and created a website educating others about the signs of domestic violence and how to address them. Michelle worked with local newspapers, met with students from her local middle school to talk about domestic violence, and also designed a Snapchat filter for people in the area to use to promote awareness. A club at Michelle's high school will sustain her project and she will continue to update and maintain her website.

Nina worked with her local food pantry and created the “Healthy Food Pantry Cookbook.” She volunteered with the pantry to determine which foods were chosen by families, and what the pantry’s needs were. Nina used this insight to create 16 dietician-approved recipes for her book, and provided cooking demos and samples to people who were picking up their food. Nina printed multiple copies of the book for distribution at the food pantry and it is posted on the Ridgefield Social Services webpage for all to access.
Kaylee Paladino
NEW CANAAN

For her Gold Award project, Kaylee collected and created a toy chest to bring entertainment and comfort to children who were staying in the hospital. She spread the word about her project through her blog where she shared her inspiration, stories, pictures, and encouraged readers to participate and brighten a child’s day. The feedback on her toy chest was immediate as she saw how the children’s faces lit up as they played with their toys. Kaylee worked with a local Girl Scout troop that will host a collection drive to donate more toys to the hospital. She also worked with other organizations and secured that they will continue to donate toys to the hospital in the future.

Bipasha Phadnis
BROOKFIELD

Bipasha’s Gold Award project helped raise awareness of animal cruelty. Bipasha advocated for pet adoption in her community through the help of social media. She reached children and adults across the country and globe and organized a pet adoption event with her local animal shelter highlighting different forms of animal cruelty and invited educational speakers. A club at Bipasha’s high school plans to continue her project and hold the awareness event annually. Bipasha hopes that those affected by her social media campaign as well as those who attended the event will continue to spread the word to adopt, and not shop, for their pets.

Tessa Ryan
BROOKFIELD

Tessa’s project, “ACL Injury Prevention in Females,” focused on educating the female athletes in her community about how to prevent ACL injuries, for female athletes are at a greater risk for this injury. Tessa worked with her school’s athletic trainer and created a website with an informational brochure, statistics, resources, and two videos that she created. One video is an interview with a local doctor and the other demonstrates different exercises and stretches to prevent ACL injuries. Because of her project, her community is better informed on ACL injuries and a number of sports teams at her school have adopted these exercises to prevent injuries in the future.

Savannah Ryan
BROOKFIELD

Savannah and a group of student volunteers from her town met with residents at a local senior living center to help strengthen their knowledge of social media and technology by teaching them how to use Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube. Savannah created lessons, printed out resources, and created binders for the residents to access at any time. Because of the lessons, the residents were able to communicate with their family members through different channels. Savannah’s binders will continue to have a place at the local senior center and the director will continue to update the binders as technology advances.

Nicole Robitaille
MANCHESTER

To help reverse the decline of the little brown bat population in Connecticut, Nicole and her team built 24 bat houses and installed them in three parks in her town. She also conducted a presentation about the bats and white-nose syndrome, and created an educational coloring book designed for elementary school students. Nicole’s bat houses provide safe, effective, and sustainable homes for local bats, and her educational displays helped raise awareness of white-nose syndrome and how to build the bat houses. The Manchester Youth Service Bureau will continue to build bat houses in the future. Nicole’s presentation and coloring books will also be used annually.

Elizabeth Sacchi
RIDGEFIELD

In order to help children reduce their anxiety when undergoing MRI or CT scans, Elizabeth created a YouTube video for children ages 4-12 and their families to access on their smartphones in the pediatric waiting room. Elizabeth also created activity booklets that provided entertainment and information for children about those types of procedures. The directions to access Elizabeth’s YouTube video will continue to hang in the pediatrics’ office for future use and her activity booklets will continue to be provided to patients.
2017 GOLD AWARDEES

Manisha Satheesh
SOUTH WINDSOR

Manisha's Gold Award project centered on educating others on ways they can get involved and volunteer for different cancer awareness organizations. By working with a local hospital, Manisha formed a club at her school and started a hat collection drive for the outpatient center where they created personalized pins and notes to go with each hat. She also created and distributed an informational pamphlet to schools, the library, and other community centers detailing how people of all ages can get involved and support different causes. Her pamphlets will continue to be distributed and her club will continue to collect hats for outpatients in the future.

Sophia Selino
NEW FAIRFIELD

For her Gold Award project, Sophia conducted a series teaching students as young as kindergarteners the power and importance of showing empathy to others. Sophia hoped that by teaching others the power of empathy through fun, easy, and entertaining activities and games, her lessons would inspire the students to avoid bullying or know how to stop bullying in the future. A national organization has adopted one of Sophia's lesson plans with the hope of teaching middle school students the power of empathy.

Natalie Schafer
MYSTIC

In order to promote kindness among elementary school students, Natalie went to her local elementary schools and taught the students about empathy and inclusion by decorating buddy benches for their school. The benches not only helped promote goodwill in the groups, but also established a sense of community. Natalie founded a club at her high school, and also created a “Pocket Full of Love” program with a storybook and activities that teach children to spread compassion. Natalie's club will continue her program after she graduates, and the buddy benches will be repainted every year.

Shannon Seman
MIDDLEBURY

Shannon's project aimed to address literacy in students who are behind in their reading levels due to a variety of reasons, whether they have learning disabilities, speech and language difficulties, or lacked positive, meaningful instruction. She focused on non-fiction stories to tie the lessons to the real world and created videos and activities to reinforce vocabulary learned through the books. She presented her strategy to teachers and reading specialists, and her lesson plans will be used to help struggling readers in schools across Waterbury.

Kathryn Schorr
DARIEN

Kathryn noticed that primary school-aged children did not have a lot of knowledge about the Long Island Sound and its habitat, so she designed and taught a series of classes about various aspects of Long Island Sound and how each person has an impact on the environment around them. Kathryn created lesson plans and a PowerPoint presentation focusing on food chains and animals in Long Island Sound. Each class involved games, a short presentation, an activity, as well as a craft to take home. Kathryn provided SoundWaters, an educational institution, and local teachers with her materials which they will use to educate future students.

Katherine Simoniello
KILLINGWORTH

Katherine was concerned about the lack of participation at her church, so she planted a garden to incorporate a space for people of all ages and backgrounds to worship in an outdoor setting. She promoted the garden through speeches during services, wrote articles for the church bulletin, and sent out a survey to people in her congregation to receive feedback after the garden opened. She also created a binder about the plants for the church to keep, and the CCD classes will take care of the garden for everyone's enjoyment.
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2017 GOLD Awardees

Macey Smith
HEBRON

Macey's project, “Child Friendly Native Plant Garden,” addressed many environmental issues facing the world today. She restored a garden at a local elementary school and filled it with native plants which will attract birds and insects, use little water, and require no pesticides. She also taught children at the school about the importance of avoiding harmful pesticides in gardening and benefits of attracting pollinators. Macey convinced the Parks and Recreation Department to curb their use of pesticides on all school grounds, and they have agreed to continue maintaining the garden.

Paige Spera
BROOKFIELD

Paige wanted to educate seventh-graders about how the process of local government in her town works. She researched issues, talked with local leaders, and then presented to 240 students. According to a survey the students took before and after the presentation, many of them gained knowledge about their town, and Paige hopes this will translate into more politically active people in the future. Her presentation materials and research are available on a website for continued use, and she is recruiting other volunteers to give the presentation.

Clare Staib-Kaufman
ORANGE

For her Gold Award project, “Preserving Local History,” Clare transcribed and digitized important historical documents in her town, allowing Orange residents to build a connection with the town’s past residents. The transcribed wills and personal inventories are available in printed form for visitors, and digital copies can be found on the historical society website for researchers even beyond the town. Members of the historical society will also be able to enhance their presentations and tours with information from these documents.

Monica Sucic
FAIRFIELD

Monica's project introduced parents of eighth-graders to aspects of high school that they might not have considered, including the different activities available and stressors that students may encounter. She conducted a survey and interviews with current high school students addressing the transition from middle school and how they deal with stress. She then presented this information and held a forum with other high school students so parents could ask questions. The counseling team at her high school will continue to use Monica's research and hold the presentation and forum each year.

Claudia Surprenant
SOUTH WINDSOR

Claudia was concerned that altar servers at her church were not performing their duties consistently, so she created a training system for all of the servers. She met with religious leaders to establish the expectations, and then recorded a video training and created an informational packet detailing how to do the job well. She also provided an in-person training so servers could practice and gain confidence or ask for clarification. Two local parishes are already using the materials to train new altar servers and will continue to use them in the future.

Molly Thomas
WILTON

Molly's Gold Award project sought to provide her community better access to the Gregg Preserve. She recruited volunteers to clear overgrown paths and removed damaged bridges. Her team then built and installed new bridges on the property. Molly also created a flyer to promote use of the preserve, and has reported seeing more people and their dogs enjoying the trails. She chose materials for the bridges that will last for many years, and the Wilton Land Trust will monitor and maintain them as necessary.
Alexis’s project, “I Am Confident Fashion Show,” was a fashion show featuring children of all abilities. She worked with an inclusion organization to recruit participants, and allowed each participant to show off their unique sense of style on the runway. Participants and their parents reported a big impact in self-confidence and saw a boost to their self-esteem. She also received positive feedback from the community and plans to continue running the show in the future.

Juliana’s project, “The Bitter Sweet Taste of Chocolate,” increased awareness of the issue of child labor on cocoa farms in Western Africa. She held an expo which included a presentation on human rights violations, the showing of a documentary about cocoa farm workers, and tasting of fair trade chocolate. The attendees reported it was an eye-opening experience. In addition, Juliana has started a campaign to make Ridgefield a fair trade town, a cause which will continue to be promoted by two other Girl Scouts.

Meghan addressed the need for a Monarch butterfly resting spot by planting a pollinator-friendly garden. She researched native plants to include in addition to the butterflies’ favorite, milkweed. She gave a presentation at the local library to educate others about the importance of these insects and was interviewed by a local newspaper. Meghan also created a brochure encouraging others to create a butterfly garden to increase the Monarch habitat in her area, and her garden will continue to be cared for by the Laurelton Hall Environmental Club.

Ann addressed the issue of childhood obesity in her community by teaching kids how to make healthy snacks. She developed a program, which she delivered at the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich, and conducted weekly surveys to gauge how the children liked the recipes they made, including hummus, salsa, zucchini bread, and fruit and vegetable smoothies. Ann created cookbooks for the participants to bring home and share with friends and family, and she posted all the recipes on a blog for anyone to view and follow.

For her Gold Award project, “Living the Healthy Way,” Angelina addressed the lack of knowledge about healthy living by educating and encouraging first-grade students at her local elementary school how to develop healthy habits. Angelina noticed that the first-graders learned about healthy topics in their wellness classes, but they did not know the benefits of developing healthy habits at a young age. She created lesson plans and taught the students about different ways of healthy living. The students in her class were able to develop healthy habits, which they will sustain throughout their lives. Angelina’s lesson plans will continue to be used to educate more students in the future.
Since 1916, approximately one million Girl Scouts have been making a meaningful, sustainable change in their communities and around the world by earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. This is the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn, and acknowledges the power behind each recipient’s dedication to not only empowering and bettering herself, but also making the world a better place for others. These young women are courageous leaders and visionary change makers.

Girl Scouts choose an issue, investigate the issue, create a plan, gather a team, take action in their communities, and educate and inspire others to make the world a better place.

**Did you know?**

- Though it has changed names, since 1916, the Girl Scout Gold Award, the organization’s highest award, has represented excellence and leadership for girls everywhere!
- The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest leadership award a Girl Scout can earn. Less than 6 percent of all Girl Scouts earn the Girl Scout Gold Award.
- A Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in any of the U.S. military branches.
- A growing number of colleges and universities across the country recognize the achievement of the Gold Award through college admission and scholarships.

**Girl Scout Gold Award at a Glance:**

- Golden Eaglet 1916-1939
- Curved Bar Award 1940-1963
- First Class 1963-1980
- Gold Award 1980-present

The Gold Award Committee is composed of caring and dedicated volunteers. Each committee member mentors girls as they embark on their journey toward the Girl Scout Gold Award, offering advice, support, and guidance along the way. These committee members’ efforts ensure the success of our GSOFCT Gold Award candidates, and their dedication is what makes our Gold Award program possible. Thank you for an excellent year.
**Girl Scout Mission**
Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

**Girl Scout Promise**
On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

**Girl Scout Law**
I will do my best to be honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do,
and to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

**La Promesa de Girl Scouts**
Por mi honor, yo trataré:
De servir a Dios y a mi patria,
ayudar a las personas en todo momento,
y vivir conforme a la Ley de Girl Scouts.

**La Ley de Girl Scouts**
Yo me esforzaré por:
Ser honrada y justa cordial y servicial,
considerada y compasiva,
valiente y fuerte, y responsable de lo que digo y hago,
y por respetarme a mí misma y a los demás,
respetar la autoridad,
usar los recursos de manera prudente,
hacer del mundo un lugar mejor, y ser hermana de cada una de las Girl Scouts.