

Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony



June 5, 2022

Expo at 10:30am-12:30pm

Ceremony at 12:30pm-3:00pm

Courtyard by Marriott Waterbury Downtown

63 Grand Street

Waterbury, CT 06702

Gold Award Girl Scouts Change the World

Gold Award Girl Scouts are change-makers. They have changed the world, changed their lives, and earned the most prestigious award in Girl Scouting.

To earn the Gold Award, a Girl Scout identifies an issue in their community, drafts a plan to address a root cause, and leads a team of volunteers to implement it. When the project is complete, the Gold Award Girl Scout and their team have made a sustainable impact on the world that continues to last beyond their involvement.

It's a huge accomplishment that also impacts the Gold Award Girl Scout as a person. How they see the world—and how the world sees them—is forever changed. It's also a credential that will be with them for the rest of their life; having the Girl Scout Gold Award on a high school transcript or resumé can make a Girl Scout stand out when it comes to college admissions, scholarship applications, internships, and job interviews.



We Are Girl Scouts



Girl Scouts bring their dreams to life as they work together to build a better world. Through programs from coast to coast, Girl Scouts of all backgrounds and abilities can be unapologetically themselves as they discover their strengths and rise to meet new challenges—whether they want to climb to the top of a tree or the top of their class, lace up their boots for a hike or advocate for climate justice, or make their first best friends. Backed by trusted adult volunteers, mentors, and millions of alums, Girl Scouts lead the way as they find their voices and make changes that affect the issues most important to them.

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.

*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

Gold Award Ceremony

10:30: **Gold Award Expo**

12:30: **Gold Award Ceremony**

- Welcome, Ephemina Nicolakis, Girl Scout Emcee
- Flag Ceremony, Troop 10862, East Hartford
- Girl Scout Experience, Ephemina Nicolakis
- Buffet Meal
- Keynote, Anna Ramirez: Stay Creative!
- Presentation of Gold Award Certificates, Letters, and Proclamations, Diana Mahoney & Pamela Scagiliarini
- Presentation of Gold Award Scholarships, Diana Mahoney & Pamela Scagiliarini
- Closing, Diana Mahoney

Gold Award Girl Scouts



Rachael Amatruda
Community Garden
Guilford, CT

Rachael noticed recipients of her church food pantry did not receive fresh produce, so took action by building a 6-plot community garden with the help of the church and church volunteers. This allowed recipients to receive fresh food with each pick-up. In addition, she wrote a cookbook containing healthy recipes that utilized items grown from the garden. A reference timeline was also documented, which can be used to prepare the garden each year.



Meg Andrade
Heard & Seen
Fairfield, CT

While talking with her friends, Meg noticed that the stigma surrounding mental health kept people from getting help and talking about mental health in a progressive way. She teamed up with her peers from school and church as well as school administrators to create a website and advertise it within the school, reaching over one hundred people. The school's counseling center has agreed to continue to advertise and utilize the website in their monthly advisory periods, and get students involved to keep the website up and running.



Lauren Badorek

Saving the Sea
Granby, CT

When Lauren learned about the impact plastic has on the ocean, she wanted to make a change. She developed a website designed to raise awareness and promote initiatives to prevent plastic from entering our oceans. The viewers of her website learned about ways to make a difference through blog articles, educational resources, and a tutorial on how to make a reusable tote bag. The website will continue to be promoted through Facebook.



Raven Barto

Air Bee N' Bee
Unionville, CT

Raven discovered that solitary bees are in great crisis and their numbers have been dwindling at a rapid rate throughout the world. She teamed up with the Farmington Land Trust and local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops to educate more than 200 community members about solitary bees and build a bee hotel structure for the Land Trust. The Land Trust will continue educating the community about the importance of solitary bees, and a patch program will encourage local Girl Scouts to continue their involvement.



Madeline C. Beck

Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Via Social Media
Stamford, CT

Driven to help promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion after witnessing the BLM protests, Maddy designed eight social media filters to help celebrate human rights. These filters made online activism accessible to over 50,000 people via Instagram and Snapchat. She also produced four videos showing others how to make social media filters themselves.



Gabriella Emma Binette

Project Conservation
Bethlehem, CT

Gabriella has been deeply immersed in the world of conservation for some time and took notice of the lack of education on the subject, specifically habitat conservation. She designed an educational unit for her local eighth graders on the basics of conservation through non-native invasive plant species removal. The middle school will continue to use her videos, worksheets, and quizzes in their curriculum to keep future generations educated on the subject.



Mary Katherine Blum

Abilis SibShop

Riverside, CT

Mary Kate knew firsthand that having a sibling with a disability is hard and isolating. Siblings are an often forgotten group especially as the family unit is focused on supporting the child with a disability. She collaborated with Abilis, a local 501c3 organization committed to serving the special needs community, to create SibShop - a support group for tweens who have family members with special needs. The group has doubled in size since starting, and Abilis will continue to offer the SibShop support group annually.



Emma Geraldine Bogursky

The Harms of Vaping

Sandy Hook, CT

Emma determined that many students in her local high school were victims to the vaping epidemic because they did not understand what it is and the harm it causes to their bodies. Gathering data from her local high school, she joined forces with her middle school health teacher to educate middle school students on the harms of vaping, reaching over 700 students. The middle school teacher has agreed to continue to utilize her presentation and knowledge in his future classes, and the students who attended these classes have passed on their knowledge to their families in the form of brochures.



Mikaela Browning

Delaying Social Media Use in Elementary and Middle School Students

Old Greenwich, CT

Mikaela has always been aware of the potential consequences of social media for teens. She coordinated with local PTAs to host training webinars for parents of 5th and 6th graders on what the dangers are and how best to combat them. Her website and brochure continued to be handed out by local schools.



Chloe W. Caplan

Envelopes for Elders

Weston, CT

Chloe noticed that an alarming number of older adults in America are suffering from loneliness for various reasons. She helped spread awareness of this issue by giving a variety of presentations to schools in her community and recruited students to participate in a pen-pal program with seniors in the area. Additionally, she established a continued partnership between the Weston Senior Center and Weston High School's community service clubs to help seniors in any way possible.



Angelina Cerulli

Farm to Firehouse

Ridgefield, CT

Angelina wanted to give the first responders in her town a peaceful, outdoor space for them to go when they needed to clear their head. She teamed up with firefighters and local youth to build a vegetable garden, providing the on-duty firefighters with healthy food and a calming environment. The firefighters will continue to utilize this garden with support from local Girl Scouts.



Emily Delayna Cocco

One Step Closer

North Haven, CT

Emily determined that the global pandemic was impacting religious education. This realization led her to establish a website for children to utilize for lessons and games related to the Catholic Church. Emily worked with her local church school during the project, and they have agreed to utilize the resources for years to come.



Ava Lynn Cho

Education of Hands-Only CPR and First Aid Skills

Weston, CT

Ava learned the importance of CPR training and education through extensive research, but soon realized there was a lack of awareness at her school. She formed the Hopkins American Heart Association (HAHA) club, which has subsequently implemented two yearly CPR classes and a CPR information lesson into the biology curriculum, including a video tutorial that Ava created. She also put together CPR/First Aid Kits to donate to the Weston Food Pantry and the Weston Senior Center. After she graduates, the HAHA Club will elect new heads to continue hosting CPR classes, donating CPR/First Aid Kits, and making sure the CPR Biology Class remains in the biology curriculum.



Erin Elizabeth Dalton

Healing Our Nurses: Self-Care Boxes and Website/Blog

Colchester, CT

Erin discovered that PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) is affecting the nursing community and their mental health, especially because of the pandemic. The culmination of her project was her website/blog, designed to be a center of learning on the importance of self-care for nurses, and an event where she was able to present her self-care boxes to the nurses. As a result of her project, the hospital has agreed to implement a self-care training program for its nursing staff.



Grace Olivia DeDonato
*THE VALLEY VISION: Healthy
Options for a Healthy Valley*
Shelton, CT

Grace sought to address the issue of food insecurity in the Lower Naugatuck Valley region through marketing, branding, and service. She teamed up with TEAM, Inc. and food pantries to create a food hub website that supports and supplies local food pantries with fresh, nutritious, and healthy food. This food hub had a reach of close to 4,000 through a targeted social media campaign to raise food insecurity awareness. TEAM, Inc. will continue to maintain the website and initiative. She hopes that her project causes more people to donate healthy options through the Bozzuto's initiative to the local food pantries so that food recipients are able to make healthier meal choices.



Kristina Jean DeMichiel
*Promoting Girls Sports in
My Community*
Burlington, CT

As a female athlete, Kristina had firsthand experience of the lack of support for girls' sports. She addressed the issue in her community by the establishment of a promotional podcast and videos that is reaching a growing audience. The videos and podcast will be shared by the school athletic director and booster association to continue to encourage support for girls' and womens' sports.



Rebecca DePietro
Spread The Kindness!
Stratford, CT

Rebecca saw how kindness was spread and then halted in her world and wanted to bring awareness to it. Through working with teachers and students, Rebecca and her Gold Award team made kindness a topic of conversation at a local elementary school. The elementary school will use resources Rebecca created such as videos, slide shows, a website, social media, key chains, and more to provide continuous kindness education to students.



Natasha Dinshaw
The Damaging Effects of Fireworks
Wilton, CT

Natasha knew that fireworks harm people, animals, and the environment. Her passion about this issue led her to educate the public about the negative effects of fireworks by creating a video and website that reached more than 3,300 people. The video and website remain on social media sites and will continue to be shared by multiple organizations around July 4th.



Rebecca Marie Filiato
Fairy Houses for Outdoor Fun
Newtown, CT

Rebecca started the fairy house project as a fun and creative way to address the issue of children spending their free time on screens and not outside in nature. Over 90 fairy house kits were delivered to participants to make, and over 30 houses were set up as a fairy house village at Newtown's Cherry Grove Preserve. Land trusts throughout Connecticut plan on using this project as a model for their own initiatives.



Paola Frunzio
Pollinator Garden
North Haven, CT

Paola realized that invasive plants were harming pollinators. To combat this issue, she teamed up with the Hamden Land Conservation Trust to create a pollinator garden. Paola then partnered with local elementary school classes to teach them about the importance of pollinators, and the dangers they face. The land trust has agreed to maintain the garden for future years, and students from the program were inspired to start their own pollinator garden.



Francesca J. Foster
Exercise Your Mind & Body
Mystic, CT

The COVID-19 pandemic uprooted children's lives at home and school, affecting their health mentally and physically. Francesca's project was aimed at helping children gain healthy habits through basketball. To do this, she produced a video teaching multiple basic basketball skills that children could use at home during the pandemic. Through her work with Groton City's Parks & Recreation Department, students in grades K through 5th can take classes teaching these skills.



Cheyenne Fuoco
Youth Aviation Education Event
Middletown, CT

Cheyenne learned that less than 10% of commercial pilots are female. She teamed up with her local EAA chapter to help put together an educational event to teach young girls about aviation and aerospace, where they learned that just because they are a girl does not mean they cannot work in a male dominated field. EAA Chapter 166 will continue to hold this event on July 17th each year, which they named National Youth Aerospace Education Day.



Sage Garver

*Roy & Margot Larsen Sanctuary
Virtual Trail Tour*

Fairfield, CT

Seeing the impact of the pandemic on Connecticut Audubon Society's Roy & Margot Larsen Sanctuary, Sage launched a virtual trail tour to increase accessibility to the Audubon's trails and educational programs and provides the educational opportunities of hearing from CT Audubon employees on any device. This trail tour will be available on CT Audubon Society's app and through their website for all visitors going forward. Her work will also be used as a model for future trail tours at the Audubon.



Anna L. Gedacht

The Methods of Anxiety/ Stress Relief
Fairfield, CT

Understanding how stressful the teenage years can be, Anna decided to teach others how to manage and battle anxiety in a school environment. As part of her project, she taught do-it-yourself methods of stress management such as making homemade stress balls along with starting an Instagram account to share tips and positive quotes. Her school Mental Health Awareness Club will continue this project in future years.



Emma Rose Griffith

Diverse Driving Condition Safety
Lyme, CT

Emma had personal experience of being involved in a car accident due to adverse driving conditions. Because of this experience, she wanted to educate those in her school more than the typical driver's education classes did. She worked with her school's physical education and health teachers and a small group of her peers to design her own driver's education lesson and video. The school will continue to use this driver's ed lesson as a part of their health curriculum every year.



Ainsley Guerrera

Sharing Our Hearts
Harwinton, CT

For her Gold Award project, Ainsley desired to break the stigma around organ donation and increase awareness of registering for the organ donation program. To tackle this issue, Ainsley constructed an informative website, which will be distributed to driving schools around the state. This website educates future drivers about what organ donation is, why it is important, and how to register to become a donor.



Megan Elizabeth Hanny
Spreading Awareness to American Sign Language/ Deaf Culture
Wilton, CT

After taking her first year of American Sign Language in high school, Megan noticed that a lot of people in her community did not know ASL or about Deaf culture. She partnered with her ASL teacher and established an interactive website designed to educate others on the vocabulary, culture, and history of ASL and the Deaf community. Megan's website has reached over 200 people through social media and email. The website continues to play a role in her high school's ASL honor society and ASL club.



Anna Lora Keith
Disability Awareness Coloring Book
Brookfield, CT

Anna noticed that there was not much awareness for invisible disabilities in her community. To raise awareness, she worked with her team to author and illustrate a book about having an illness nobody can see. This book also helps those with invisible disabilities to know they are not alone. The Coalition Against Pediatric Pain has agreed to sustain the book on their website.



Helen Hawes
Connecting Seniors
Bethany, CT

With many things closed during the pandemic, Helen wanted to help connect senior citizens in their town to the community through the local library. To do this, Helen developed a webpage with community resources specifically geared toward seniors. The local library has agreed to host the webpage and update it as needed.



Neya Kidambi
A Teen Girl's Guide
Trumbull, CT

Neya knew that becoming a teenager was difficult, and she recognized the importance of mental health services and emotional outlets. She teamed up with a local licensed professional counselor to conduct a week of workshops at the Trumbull YMCA. Sessions tackled issues ranging from stress relief and social media to self-care and body image. Attendees were transformed from the experience, and many have gone on to start school club inspired by the workshops.



Elle Lansing
Senior Strides
Farmington, CT

For her Gold Award project, Elle produced two full length exercise videos for seniors to help ensure seniors continue to live an active life even when mobility is a factor. She also taught nine exercises classes at two local nursing homes to increase physical activity for seniors. The project will be sustained through monthly classes hosted by a member at each nursing home. The videos can also be accessed online for homebound seniors to utilize.



Samantha A. Lavoie
Help Our Shelled Friends
Niantic, CT

Samantha noticed that all the turtle nests were being torn up in her yard. Upon researching this problem further, she found how turtles have been negatively impacted by land development. To spread awareness and help fix this issue, she built an easy-to-use and shareable website. In order for this to be shared continuously and updated as needed, the website editing has been passed on to a club at Samantha's high school.



Caitlin May
Gold Meals
Fairfield, CT

Caitlin recognized food insecurity as a growing issue both locally and globally. For her project, she aimed to address the issue in her community by creating a team that would make meals for programs such as Operation Hope and food pantries. The group meets twice a month to prepare food and ensure nutritious meals are consistently provided to food kitchens, and to bring attention to hunger issues in different communities. Through this group and through online resources, Caitlin's project seeks to continue to lessen the food insecurity in her community.



Caroline J. McGrath
Creating a Resource for Eating Disorders
Ridgefield, CT

Recognizing that the number of both girls and boys of middle and high school ages struggling with eating disorders is dramatically on the rise, Caroline wanted to offer a resource to make a change. Caroline designed a flyer that includes warning signs of eating disorders, resources for where to get help, facts, and statistics about the dangers of eating disorders, and more. The flyer is now part of the curriculum of every first-year health class at her high school and on the school website for all to access. Using this resource, students can gain knowledge and awareness about eating disorders and learn who to contact for help when struggling with this disorder.



Olivia Melillo

Too Little Not Too Late

Bethlehem, CT

Olivia learned Vietnam Veterans were not being recognized as much for their sacrifices as Veterans of other wars. To combat this issue, she partnered with the American Legion in her town and interviewed the Vietnam Vets to gather their stories, and subsequently created a PSA video to instruct students about what the veterans went through during the war. This allowed Olivia to not only teach students about the Vietnam War but also about the Legion's annual Flag Day ceremony. The local high school agreed to use the PSA video as a learning tool and resource for students when learning about the Vietnam War.



Emily Misluk

Pollination Rejuvenation

Harwinton, CT

Emily started a large pollinator garden at her local DEEP Fish Hatchery. This garden consists of native plants to attract pollinators and provide them with a food source and shelter. In addition, a bee house was erected, and an educational sign was placed for visitors. Emily also authored a brochure with a QR code linking to her in-depth research paper about the types of pollinators, the challenges facing them/the decline in the pollinator population, and what people can do to help save the pollinator species.



Leah Mueller

Environmental Take Action Toolkit

Simsbury, CT

In seventh grade, Leah began learning about human caused environmental issues beginning a lifelong passion for this issue. Through the development of the Environmental Take Action Toolkit, Leah was able to motivate fellow students to make changes to become more eco-friendly. Her toolkit is being used by Girl Scout Troops, Simsbury High School, and the Simsbury Sustainability Committee and has also been sent to 50 students across the nation.



Maggie Nardini

Community Literacy Kiosks (CLK):

Make Literacy Click!

New Haven, CT

The closure of libraries and schools during the pandemic brought Maggie's attention to the fact that children in New Haven no longer had access to free literature. She worked with the New Haven Free Public Library to build three book kiosks in different areas of the city to provide 24/7 free access to literature. To address the issue further, she ran literacy workshops upon the installation of each kiosk. Two city library branches have agreed to stock and maintain the kiosks ensuring books are always available for those utilizing them.



Alexis Merlyn Neunteufel
Helping Teens Prepare for Life
Easton, CT

Alexis-Merlyn saw a lot of teenagers lacking rudimentary life skills, which can make it difficult once they graduate from high school. In an effort to change that and use a medium that youth are attracted to, Merlyn created a series of short videos that taught life skills on topics such as finances, cooking, resumes, car care, and more. This YouTube channel will continue to be updated by youth in her town.



Jacqueline M. Palmer
Brightening Up Berry School
Bethel, CT

Jacqueline learned that colors could help students academically and emotionally. She worked with Berry Elementary School to paint a mural and develop a comprehensive curriculum to address this issue, both influencing students with colors and teaching them about color psychology. This is sustained through a video, worksheet, and curriculum addition that will be shown to kindergarten students every year by the art department.



Phoebe Opdahl
Empowerment Book Club
New Fairfield, CT

When Phoebe heard that girls are significantly less likely to contribute to classroom discussions than boys because of self-consciousness, she knew that something needed to change. To help young girls become more confident, Phoebe started two book clubs for elementary school girls, both of which met once a week for a month-long period. All of the books featured in this experience were about the lives of young girls around the world and from different time periods, teaching girls that their future can be whatever they want it to be, as well as, that there are many powerful and spirited girls that got us to where we are today. The book club will be continued to be run annually.



Dilyn E. Parrott
Feral Cat Cooler Homes
Enfield, CT

While researching ideas for her Gold Award, Dilyn remembered the struggle feral cats in her community went through during the winter. Working alongside the Enfield Community Cat Project, she built six insulated cooler homes so that the cats could stay warm and dry. Additionally, Dilyn educated her community on how to build houses, as well as recognize and help feral cats. The Community Cat Project has agreed to take the coolers and the documentation on how to build them for the future.



Valli Pendyala
Inclusivity in US History
South Windsor, CT

Valli was taking AP US History their sophomore year, when they noticed that US History classes did not spend more than a token amount of time on the histories of different minority groups in America. They worked with social studies teachers in their school to create supplemental lesson plans that focused on minority history for teachers to use along with their lessons. In addition, Valli worked with the social studies curriculum coordinator for their school district to change the entirety of the 10th grade US History curriculum to make it more inclusive. This new curriculum will continue to be taught to 10th graders. Additionally, Valli recorded and published all of their lessons, which are publicly available on YouTube.



Hannah Andress Pettibone
Coping Skills Coloring Book
Wilton, CT

In spring of 2020, Hannah realized how much anxiety their younger siblings and community members were facing because of the pandemic. In order to help children with this struggle, she authored a coloring book full of stress coping skills children can learn, such as hiking, playing with friends, baking, and drawing, all accompanied with a hand-drawn illustration to color. This coloring book is used as a resource by many school districts in the area, as well as local pediatricians.



Olivia R. Regan
Blessings Box
Hamden, CT

Olivia noticed on her bus rides home from school how many homeless people there really were in New Haven, CT. It saddened her to see how little these people had in their possession, watching other people drive by and not offer them a second glance. She soon got the idea to partner with Continuum of Care, an organization in New Haven, CT that specializes in working with the homeless. Olivia worked with this organization and one of her tech teachers at school, to build a blessings box. This box holds items that the state does not offer money for, such as basic household & cleaning items, first aid, and general toiletries.



Libby Riggs
Perceptions International
Haddam, CT

Influenced by her passions for disability advocacy and the arts, Libby founded Perceptions in hopes of combating the lack of understanding surrounding the concept of disability. Perceptions is an international community amplifying the voices of young artists, writers, and musicians with disabilities. Through contests, social media posts, online events, and podcast episodes, Libby and the Perceptions team aim to uplift the diverse stories of the disability community. With over 1000 sessions on its website, Perceptions strives to have a wide-reaching, permanent influence on its viewers and community members.

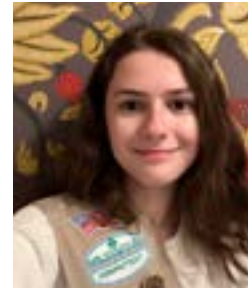


Avery A. Sample

Relieving Stress Through Rest and Relaxation

Fairfield, CT

Avery noticed that many students her age experienced stress. In order to make changes that would help students lower stress, she decided to establish a new club at her school. Rest, Relaxation, Relieve Club (R^3) would act as a safe place for them to have their voices heard. In addition, R^3 maintains a large calendar of events in the school.



Sofia R. Schaffer

Habitat Hedgerows

Ridgefield, CT

In her reading, Sofia discovered that the Earth's wild vertebrates have experienced a 60% population decline due to habitat loss. Inspired to act, she decided to write and illustrate a book that demonstrates how the average homeowner can make a positive impact by simply growing native plants in their yard. The book is available in local libraries around the state to be checked out by citizens.



Annabelle Schafer

Knitting Towards a Better Future

Mystic, CT

Annabelle wanted to help those in need and learned that hygiene products are always in critical supply, so she decided to support the effort in a unique way. Annabelle worked within her community to educate others about poverty and create a program offering a sustainable supply of hygiene products in finger-knitted bags to the patrons of St. Vincent de Paul Place in Norwich. Her website continues to reach others, who come to understand the value and emotional impact of donating needed hygiene products in handmade bags.



Faith Shores

The Life of a Native American Child

West Simsbury, CT

Faith discovered that the wigwam at the Simsbury Historical Society did not have any educational material. She worked with the historical society director to develop a program for elementary school children to learn about Native American children through games and educational material. The Simsbury Historical Society will continue to use this program both for self-guided learning and future programs.



Ayana M. Shrestha
Covid Safety in Schools
Windsor, CT

Ayana observed that students were not maintaining safety precautions in schools, leading to an increase in the spread of the coronavirus. She partnered with the school nurse and many of her peers to create a PSA, reaching over 700 people through classes and social media. Ayana started a club that focused on health concerns in school facilities and created an Instagram account that is constantly updated to spread awareness about keeping safe during the pandemic and other illnesses.



Haven M. Sushon
Youth and Voting
Old Greenwich, CT

While studying data at school, Haven discovered how important voting turnout is, particularly among those under the age of 30. They worked with the League of Women Voters locally to re-assess the youth outreach programs the LWV run. After completing their project, Haven gave templates for future outreach to the league, including several posters, which will be used by the outreach coordinators.



Sarah Swenson
Endometriosis in Teens
Madison, CT

Sarah learned that endometriosis is often under diagnosed, and that there is a lack of education among teens about this important health issue. To tackle this issue, Sarah developed an educational pamphlet, available in both digital and printed formats, and short presentation about endometriosis in teens. Local pediatricians and gynecologists will utilize these materials.



Mj Taylor
What Are Your Pronouns?
Sandy Hook, CT

During high school, Mj saw that very few teachers asked for student's pronouns, creating a lack of inclusion for all students. They researched and developed materials to utilize with teachers and educate them on how to ask for pronouns as well as increase their awareness on why it's important. Mj also presented at the national Our True Colors conference, and to students about asking for pronouns and allyship. Through this, both their high school and surrounding districts will continue implementing and learning about asking for pronouns. The public can also access video presentations on



Amber Tomasino
Transition to High School
 Granby, CT

For most students, the transition between middle school and high school can be nerve-wracking and stressful, so Amber addressed this global issue by developing her own educational video and flyer with tips and advice from her first year. These were used at the freshman orientation at her school, which is held every year. A follow-up survey showed that after watching the video a lot of freshmen felt much better about starting their new year of school. Amber's video can be viewed on her YouTube channel at Amber Tomasino: Tips/Advice for High School Freshman + Study tips (<https://tinyurl.com/6va8crru>).



Maeve G. Tucker
Region 10 Diabetes Awareness Website
 Burlington, CT

Maeve was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes (T1D) when she was 16. Like her, many people are misdiagnosed, or their delayed diagnosis causes ketoacidosis. She created a diabetes education and awareness website as a resource for the biology curriculums at her high school. The website is open to the public, and as breakthroughs in diabetes research occurs, her team will edit the website to include the most accurate, up-to-date information.



Olivia "Liv" Wright
Unified Sports In Connecticut
 Ellington, CT

Liv's goal for the Gold Award was to encourage other kids who struggle with disabilities and who are nervous to sign up for Unified athletic activities to be comfortable doing so. She realized there was a lack of information about Unified sports activities offered to younger students in her community, and so she decided to author a brochure for students with disabilities to provide them with information on how to get involved in surrounding towns. The brochure will be updated and shared out for years to come.



Anna Regina Zoccolillo
STAR Zoom Gatherings
 New Canaan, CT

Through her church buddies' group, Anna discovered the need for a relaxed environment for young adults with special needs to interact and grow their social skills. She teamed up with STAR Inc., a non-profit organization in Norwalk, to help foster this type of atmosphere. Due to the challenges of the pandemic, this was primarily accomplished on Zoom. STAR Inc. will continue this program through the pandemic with the guide of activities that Anna created for them and hopes to move to in-person offerings in the future.

Thank You!



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