



Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony

Saturday, June 12, 2021

Liberty Station, North Promenade
2851 Dewey Road
San Diego, CA 92106





The mark of the truly remarkable.

Gold Award Girl Scouts are the dreamers and the doers who take “make the world a better place” to the next level. The Girl Scout Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable—proof that not only can she make a difference, but that she already has.

Girl Scouts is the best leadership development program in the world. For nearly 110 years, Girl Scouting has given girls the tools they need to lead, break barriers, and create positive change. The Girl Scout Gold Award is the culmination of the leadership experiences that girls build. It is the most prestigious award for girls, and the most difficult to earn. Seniors and Ambassadors who earn the Gold Award tackle issues that are dear to them and drive lasting change in their communities and beyond. Girls demonstrate extraordinary leadership through Gold Award “Take Action” projects that address the root cause of an issue; build and oversee a volunteer team; meet measurable goals; and shape people's beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors.

Think of the Gold Award as a key that can open doors to opportunities. A Gold Award Girl Scout:

- Stands apart in the college admissions process
- Earns college scholarships
- Accesses a powerful and supportive network of Gold Award Girl Scouts
- Enlists in the armed forces at a higher pay grade (than individuals who have not earned the Gold Award)

*Congratulations,
2021 Gold Award Girl Scouts!*

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.

2021 Gold Award Committee

Anne Bader
Tracy Bracht
Moyosore Buari
Sherri Charter
Tiffany Chatham Smith
Proma Dewanjee
Marilyn Fullen
Jennipher Harris

Cora Long
Jennifer Pernicano
Liza Potocki
Judy Pritchett
Gabrielle Rockwell
Marni von Wilpert
Kelly Waggonner
Linda Wightman

Thank you to our event sponsor:

Since 1978



A special thank you to all our volunteer leaders
and parents who take the time to make a difference
in the lives of young women.

* The word "God" can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on one's spiritual beliefs.



2021 Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony

Introduction of 2021 Gold Award Girl Scouts

Mistress of Ceremonies

Perette Godwin
Supervising Public Information Officer, City of San Diego

Recognition of Support

Rita Datko
Chair, Girl Scouts San Diego Board of Directors

Council Address

Carol M Dedrich
Chief Executive Officer

Guest Speaker

Summer Stephan
District Attorney, San Diego County

Presentation of Awards

Carol M Dedrich and Perette Godwin



Get an inside look at this year's Gold Award
Girl Scouts' projects! Hover your phone's camera
over the QR code to access our digital photo album.

#GoldAwardGirlScout #GSSD #BestPlace4Girls

Girl Scouts San Diego Council Leadership



Rita Datko

Chair, Board of Directors

Rita has volunteered with Girl Scouts San Diego for over 20 years, serving as a troop leader, service unit manager, and national delegate. She has served on the Girl Scout Board of Directors since 2017, and been active on the Executive, Finance, and Board Development committees. She earned a Thanks Badge, Girl Scouting's

highest award for volunteerism. All four of her daughters were Girl Scouts. She brings 28 years of experience in the healthcare industry to her role as the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Sharp Health Plan. Rita graduated from San Diego State University with a bachelor of science degree in accounting. In 2017, she received the San Diego Business Journal's CFO of the Year Award.

Carol M Dedrich

Chief Executive Officer

Carol Dedrich attributes the lessons she learned as a young Girl Scout with preparing her for leadership roles in school, the military and throughout her career. She is committed to helping girls develop their courage, confidence, and character in order to overcome insecurities that can plague girls throughout their lives. She is also dedicated to building collaborations and helping women of all ages to support each other, while expanding perspectives, skills, and experience. Carol has over 20 years of experience at the executive level in all three economic sectors: government/military, corporate and nonprofit. She has an MBA, is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management, graduate of Lead San Diego—Influence, San Diego Business Journal SD500 2019 and 2020, Los Angeles Business Journal's Women Making a Difference.



2021 Girl Scout Gold Award Speakers

Summer Stephan

District Attorney, San Diego County

District Attorney Summer Stephan has devoted her life to protecting children and families, providing justice to the most vulnerable, and is a national leader in the fight against human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Summer is focused on advancing public safety through fair and equal justice, bringing solutions to complex issues with a unique data-driven, commonsense approach that works to address the root causes of certain crimes driven by mental illness and addiction. Summer leverages her extensive courtroom, management and leadership experience to set clear public safety priorities in collaboration with law enforcement and the community, keeping San Diego County one of the safest urban regions in the U.S.



Perette Godwin

**Supervising Public Information Officer
City of San Diego**



Perette is a member of Girl Scout San Diego's Global Action Volunteers Team and co-leader of her daughter's Girl Scout troop. She brings more than 15 years of experience in public relations, social media, and marketing to her job as the

City of San Diego's supervising public information officer. Previously, she was an award-winning anchor and reporter for news stations in San Diego and Yuma. Her background includes development and fundraising for local nonprofits, and she sometimes assists with KPBS TV's on-air efforts. Perette is a past-president and former board member of the SDSU Alumni Engagement board; and has served on the board of San Diego Unified Council of PTAs. She received the 2016 Ambassador Legacy of Leadership award and the 2014 Alumni Diversity award from SDSU. She received the 2016 Ambassador Legacy of Leadership award and the 2014 Alumni Diversity award from SDSU.

Gold Award Girl Scouts



Melos Ambaye

Helping Students in Balancing Athletics and Academics

As an athlete at S.T.E.P. Academy, a regional track club, Melos discovered many of the athletes were missing track practices due to academic setbacks. So she developed a plan to assist student-athletes, ages 6-18, to successfully balance school and sports. Melos created a facility within the track club where she and her team spent hours tutoring the athletes before and after practices. She recruited other tutors, crafted digital educational materials, and designed an academic space with donated materials and technology, providing dozens of student-athletes with access to free tutoring. The program was successful, and many student-athletes drastically raised their grades. In addition, Melos created for every grade level online resource notebooks that S.T.E.P. Academy will continue to use and promote as the years go by.

Through her Gold Award project, Melos learned the importance of identifying communal problems and taking initiative. The experience allowed her to develop a greater sense of adaptability and perspective, skills that will surely be valuable in her future leadership endeavors.

A special thank you to my project advisor, Coach Rodney Williams; my Gold Award Committee mentor, Judy Pritchett; all of the student athletes and parents at S.T.E.P. Academy; and all the troop leaders who have facilitated my growth since I was a Daisy. I would additionally like to thank my family and friends, as none of this could have been possible without them!



Maya Amin

Healthy Eating for Athletes

After realizing that teen athletes and young children didn't understand the correlation between nutrition and exercise, Maya wanted to educate her community about this issue. She hosted clinics at San Marcos High to inform incoming freshman athletes about healthy eating and brought in her project advisor, a Scripps Health nutritionist, to speak to her audiences. During the pandemic, Maya was eager to reach students, so she coordinated Zoom clinics to continue to spread her message of eating healthy. Maya also created a global social media page where she posts key health facts and tips. She hopes her project has had an influence on young athletes, and that her project has a lasting impact.

Learning to lead her team, host the clinics, and better work with younger children taught Maya key leadership skills. She also learned financial responsibility as she managed and spent project funds.

I want to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jen Pernicano, and my project advisor, Diana Lee, for helping and guiding me through the course of my project, and my family and troop for their constant support.



Katie Austin

Bannister Family House Children's Room

The Bannister Family House provides a haven of hope and comfort for families with a loved one in long-term or critical care at UC San Diego Health. So that children and families staying there can meet someplace besides their bedrooms to watch TV, play games,

read books, and so forth, Katie created a new, family-style space. She conducted surveys to receive feedback about the preexisting room, and used that information and a design professional's assistance to create the optimal layout. She filmed her remodeling project and created a video to promote volunteer opportunities at the Bannister Family House. Katie made presentations to her school, churches, MADCAPS groups, and Girl Scout troops, as well as to Thornton Hospital leaders who are creating a similar facility in the La Jolla area. Her project is being used by the designers of this second housing unit.

Katie learned valuable leadership and management skills by organizing and implementing a new vision for a community room. She engaged with volunteers and reached out to donors to discuss designs and secure materials for installation.

I would like to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tracy Bracht, for her guidance; Jana Fortune from Bannister Family House for working with me for many months to come up with and implement my project; and Rebecca Flynn for her extensive knowledge and guidance through the design process. I would also like to thank my mother, Karen Austin, for her unconditional support and encouragement through the past 13 years of my Girl Scout journey.



Amanda Becerra

Missing and Exploited Children: Education on How to Keep Children Safe

Amanda created a presentation for parents of elementary school students (but adaptable to those with children of all ages) that addressed the issue of missing and

exploited children. It included information about the difficulties of identifying found children, especially if they are too young to remember personal information such as their names, their parents' names, or their addresses and phone numbers. Amanda gave parents and caregivers tools and tips to help prevent children from going missing, and information about what to do if they experienced a missing child. She made her presentation sharable and taught other teens how to educate about this topic so they can continue presenting about it.

When Amanda's original project proposal did not work out the way she had intended, she used her problem solving skills to create a new, successful one. She developed research skills while seeking the information needed to create a PowerPoint, and enhanced her public speaking skills during the presentations. Amanda reached a variety of audiences, and made a lasting impact on her community and the world.

I want to give a huge thank you to my family for their support throughout the Gold Award process and my Girl Scouting career. I would not be where I am without them. Thanks also to my troop leader, Heidi Russell, and her daughter, Makayla Mayor, for helping me with this project. Thank you to my project advisor Rebecca Rodriguez, and to my community partner, Don Tennant, for their help and guidance. I also want to express my gratitude to Ms. Wightman, my Gold Award Committee mentor, for working with me through all of my project changes, and for making sure my project stayed on track. Finally, I want to thank Girl Scouts for providing me with this opportunity to make a change in my community and for helping me grow into the strong young lady I am today.



Madison BIANES

Honest Adventures Around the World

To increase awareness and respect for other humans and cultures, Madison held a series of workshops for teens and young adults to discuss different cultures around the world, especially those in under-privileged areas.

Her workshops focused on the worldwide issue of malnourishment in children, explaining what a poor diet as a child can do to an adult body. By exposing young people to the information, she helped encourage activism to reduce the rates of malnourishment across the globe.



Claire BICKETT

Environmental Education

Claire identified lack of awareness as the root cause of environmental issues. She addressed this by making a series of community presentations to teach children to have a more environmentally conscious world view. While her target audience

was mostly children in grades 1-5 at Del Mar Hills Academy and in Girl Scout troops, she also addressed several groups of adults. In addition, Claire created a children's book that is available worldwide.

Claire learned more about her love for teaching and spreading awareness about current issues. She also learned the importance of staying flexible when challenges arise, especially during our current online climate.

I would like to thank my Girl Scout Committee mentor, Tiffany Chatham Smith, for all of her much-needed help, as well as my troop, troop leader, and project advisor. Everyone was so helpful, and I would not have been able to finish this project without them!



Riley Blemker

Beach Cleanup Club

Riley formed a Beach Cleanup Club to beautify the San Diego coastline and create awareness about worldwide ocean pollution. The club conducted multiple beach cleanups, hosted guest speakers, and created educational opportunities for the

members, which consist mainly of high school and middle school students in Scripps Ranch. Through a partnership with the Scripps Ranch Civic Association and by creating social media platforms, the club has garnered attention at local and global levels. To date, the club has more than 200 followers and has collected over 100 pounds of trash from local beaches. Riley has successfully engaged and inspired younger students to ensure the continuation of the Beach Cleanup Club into the future.

Riley learned the importance of effective communication and accountability. In order to be successful in her educational component, Riley became less self-conscious and more comfortable advocating for the larger cause.

Thank you to all my supporters, including troop leaders Natasha Maxwell and Eileen Pelina, project advisor Eric Schweinfurter, Gold Award Committee mentor Moyosore Buari, and the members of my Beach Cleanup Club. Also, special thanks to my parents who have encouraged me through all my endeavors!

Instagram: @beachcleanupbabes



Emma Borgie

Implementation of Preschool Disaster Readiness Program

Being prepared for a natural disaster in Southern California is an essential component of a safe and secure learning environment. Although preschools maintain limited emergency programs for licensure

and accreditation, Emma wanted to implement a meaningful and sustainable comprehensive disaster readiness program at Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church (RBCPC) Preschool. Her program involved creating hands-on educational activities, developing a preschool emergency bag program, producing creative videos about fire and earthquake safety, and filming a segment of Chapel Times with Pastor Borgie and his koala puppet discussing coping skills. Her project will be used every year at RBCPC, and her Disaster Readiness Program manual provides other preschools with access to her videos and supporting material.

Emma learned valuable leadership and communication skills and gained confidence. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she had to adapt and problem-solve to ensure her project remained meaningful to preschoolers, families, and preschool staff.

I want to thank my project advisor, Mrs. Peck; my parents and grandparents; RBCPC Preschool Director Ms. Vandergrift; my Girl Scout troop leader, Nancy Mowry; and Girl Scout Committee mentors Ms. Waggonner and Ms. Pritchett for providing me with the support and resources needed to help me complete the project. I would also like to thank the RBCPC teachers, students, and families for their support and participation in the natural disaster activities. Finally, I would like to thank my brothers, Andrew and Jonathan, for helping me film and edit the informational videos.



Alyna Boyd

Paper Pathways Project

Spiral notebooks are a part of every middle and high school student's academic life. At the end of every school year, thousands of notebooks with unused paper are thrown out into our landfills. Alyna created the Paper Pathways Project, a collaboration

with Eastlake High School students to repurpose paper into new spiral notebooks for students with limited financial resources. The educational video she created will be shared with clubs at her school that work to make a difference through service and recycling. The Paper Pathways Project is available on YouTube as a guide that other schools and students can use to implement this program.

During the research portion of her project, Alyna learned about the environmental impact of paper consumption. She also gained an idea of how many students in San Diego county are financially disadvantaged or experiencing homelessness. The project strengthened her leadership, creativity, and communication skills.

I want to give a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Ricardo Cooke, principal of Eastlake High School, for his encouragement, enthusiasm, and support, and for believing in me. I would also like to thank my mentor, Ms. Linda Wightman, for being so available and for giving me some very helpful advice. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for being my greatest supporters and cheerleaders.



Maria Burritt

Accessibility Theater

People with sensory-related disabilities are often unable to access performance theater because of the fear of experiencing sensory overload. Maria created an in-depth guide to teach organizations how to create sensory-friendly productions, making theater accessible to all people.

She then collaborated with local theaters to incorporate sensory-friendly theater into their seasons. Maria also created an online database to help families find productions that provide specific accommodations. The guide, database, and more information about sensory-friendly theater can be found on her project website.

Maria gained communication, organization, and time management skills while working on her project. She also became more confident in her power as a young woman to foster a community of inclusion, and learned about her personal leadership style.

Thank you to all the incredible people who advised me throughout this project, including Barry Edelstein, Lisa Porter, Emily Dolton, Gijo Tirado, and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Anne Bader. I am incredibly grateful for my mom (who was my Girl Scout leader for 12 years) and Jo Dee Jacob, who have been empowering the leader within me since I was a Daisy. A special heartfelt thanks goes to all the individuals with special needs and their families who helped teach and guide me.

accessibilitytheater.com



Catrina Calkins

Website for Home Economics

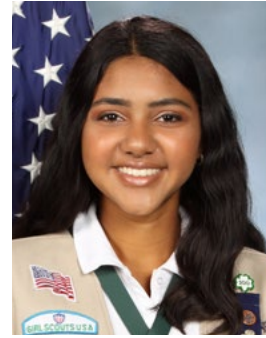
Catrina found out that many schools eliminated home economics because of the subject was incorrectly labeled as appropriate only for girls. Parents then became responsible to teach their children valuable skills like living a healthy lifestyle,

financial management, planning for the future, and how to do cleaning, laundry, repairs, and other household tasks. Many parents either did not have time for this or assumed their kids could look up the information on the Internet. With help from her church, St. Gregory the Great, Catrina created “Catrina Can!,” an easily accessible website with this vital information. It includes the 15 videos she created to prepare people to use the information and feel confident teaching it to others. Her website and videos will remain accessible, so they can continue to teach her audience valuable skills that they can use throughout their life.

Catrina learned that she can be very organized when necessary, and that teamwork is very important to any project. Many of the obstacles she encountered were overcome with help from her team, and she learned that having people with many different skill sets on your team also is important, especially when a problem needs a different mindset than the one you have. She also learned that sometimes she loses sight of why she started working towards something, but taking a step back helps put everything into focus.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me throughout this entire process and my troop, especially my leaders, Gigi Howland and Harriett Hall. I would not be where I am today without them.

tinyurl.com/52zs4xa7



Shruti Chari

One Wish One Step

Type 1 diabetes (t1d), an incurable autoimmune disorder of the pancreas, is growing at an alarming rate. There is little awareness of this disease that, undiagnosed, leads to life-threatening complications. The initiative to take action to save lives and

reduce the stigma associated with t1d is personal to Shruti. Her research and collaborations led her to create a presentation that helps identify t1d symptoms, consequences of mismanagement, treatment options, and technological advancements. To broaden her reach, she founded OneWishOneStep.org, which features her surveys and a video recording of her presentation.

Shruti learned the importance of good communication skills, whether conveying her message in person, by email, or via Zoom. She exhibited discipline and persistence by emailing hundreds of people within several days to increase participation on her project website. After watching Shruti's presentation, more than 5,000 viewers in five countries increased their understanding of this debilitating disease by 178%.

I want to thank my family, Deanna Kasper of JDRF, and Gold Award Committee mentor Linda Wightman, as well as the Poway Kiwanis Club, which made a generous donation.

OneWishOneStep.org



Kimberly Cheung

Stay Ready to Play

Stay Ready to Play is an educational campaign and interactive application designed by Kimberly to share the importance of listening to your body and mind. Concerned by the number of preventable injuries she saw in youth sports,

Kimberly created a Gold Award project to provide athletes with resources to learn, collaborate, and reflect about their physical and mental health. She sparked conversations about the topic among sports teams, athletic trainers, and health-based organizations. Her work provided her community with accessible skills to prevent, detect, and respond to injuries, and inspiration to maintain a lifelong focus on health.

Kimberly learned that when she has a vision to create change or share a message, she can achieve whatever she sets her mind to with resilience, positivity, and kindness. She is excited to continue growing, taking the leadership, organization, and problem-solving skills she learned from her Gold Award project into all aspects of her life.

I want to extend my most heartfelt thanks to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tiffany Chatham Smith; my project advisor, Coach Kim Phillips; Loanne Cheung (my troop leader and amazing mom); Jake Sager (Ready to Play's fantastic software developer); and my Girl Scout troop members from the time I was a Daisy. Special shout out to Anna Bradley, who is also a Gold Award Girl Scout! You have all been here to support me throughout so many moments of my life and inspire me to become a better person!



Samantha Clary

Help College Students Eat Better

Samantha's project addressed the need to have college students eat healthier. She created the SDSU Student Healthy Eating Pinterest page and spread the word about healthy eating throughout Kappa Delta sororities throughout the country and across online platforms. Her project advisor continues to use her information as a resource when educating others about health and nutrition at SDSU. College students now know more affordable ways to prepare and eat healthier food, even with limited equipment and time.

Due to the pandemic, Samantha found it hard at times to meet with her advisor, but they communicated via email and she was encouraged throughout the project. One of the best skills she learned was the power of communication. She also developed the confidence to reach out for help.

Thank you to Stephanie Galia who put me in contact with Tyler Rolling, who was my project advisor and very encouraging throughout the entire project. Thank you to Judy Pritchett, my Gold Award Committee mentor who was extremely helpful the entire process and was the key to my success. And special thank you to my parents who have supported me throughout my 12 years as a Girl Scout and pushed me to earn my Gold Award.



Kylee Cochran
Kylee's Canyon Clean-Up

Kylee—in conjunction with Friends of Tierrasanta Canyons—educated Serra High School students, community members, and a team of helpers about canyon lands in the Tierrasanta region, including the problems with nonnative plants and the importance of native species. She rallied her team to eliminate many nonnative plants—including large swaths of black mustard and French broom—as well as the dried palm trees fronds that create a fire hazard. Her participants also planted 40 native trees, plus local shrubs and flowers. As a result, wildlife that lives in the canyons can continue to thrive, and the community will have healthy canyons to enjoy for years to come.

Kylee learned the value of persistence and that, when people come together, they can make a difference. Her hard work enabled her to gather community members to help ensure the canyons in Tierrasanta will be healthy for years to come.

Thank you to Maria Sanders of Friends of Tierrasanta Canyons for assisting me throughout the project; Serra High School Principal Dr. Erica Renfree, for spreading the word about Kylee's Canyon Cleanup; and Linda Wightman, my Gold Award Committee mentor. Gratitude and giant thanks to all the many friends and community members who participated in the project. We made a difference!



Lia Cociorva
Healthy Eating Made Fun

Lia found that many preteens have a disconnected relationship with the food they eat and with their body image, due to a lack of engaging educational resources about realistic and healthy eating and lifestyle choices. To make the subject more attractive to youth, she wrote and illustrated an informational comic book about how to feel comfortable cooking for themselves and forming balanced diets and eating habits. Collaborating with a dietitian, and securing the help of her local library, Lia designed a curriculum for workshops in which local preteens and mentors discuss their relationships with food and their bodies.

Lia gained leadership skills by heading a publishing team, and soft skills through interactions with her audiences. In her workshop sessions, Lia learned how to mentor pre-teens, making meaningful connections with them and overcoming the difficulties of virtual platforms.

Thank you to the San Diego County Library and Del Mar Branch Manager Polly Cipparrone; my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jen Pernicano; my project advisor Heather M. Cohen; my encouraging family; and my continuously supportive friend Alec Cheng, who was integral to my publishing team.



Brooke Cote

March for Music

Most young people are not introduced to music until they have already developed an interest in sports or other extracurricular activities. Brooke wanted to give elementary school students a chance to experience music, hoping that they'd continue the passion throughout middle and high school. She partnered with Olympic View Elementary School to hold afterschool band classes once a week for six weeks. At the end of the year, the students had a winter concert to show their parents what they learned. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, Brooke worked individually with one of her students. She also filmed videos, which are now on YouTube for future students to access and enjoy for years to come.

Brooke learned that she is a very good teacher, by differentiating her approach to each student she was able to explain things so all of the students could understand. She is also skilled at organizing lesson plans and managing class time.

I want to give my greatest thanks to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jen Pernicano; my project advisor and former elementary school teachers, Ms. Innumerable, Mrs. Umali, and Mrs. Lines; my band director, Mr. McCray; all of my student teachers; and, most importantly, my mother.

tinyurl.com/236wm4rk



Lauren Crane

Voter Awareness and the Importance of Voting and Voter Registration

Feeling frustrated and helpless about not having the ability to vote in the 2020 elections, Lauren wanted to find a way for her voice to be heard and do her part to encourage others to exercise their voting rights. She initiated a multi-faceted civic engagement campaign to build voter awareness leading up to the presidential election. Her project addressed the root issue of low voter turnout among young people. She partnered with the San Diego County Registrar of Voters to produce a Voter Education Toolkit with social media posts and infographics to educate students about voter registration. Additionally, she painted a mural in City Heights—an area with historically low voter turnout—to boost engagement through bold public art. Finally, she partnered with the League of Women Voters North County to provide voting-related information and resources at farmers markets, club meetings, Girl Scout troop meetings, and other community events. The High School Voter Education Toolkit will be available for many years to come, and the League of Women Voters NCSO now has more resources about community outreach opportunities that they can implement in the future.

Lauren organized a team of people that she could rely on and then exercised learned leadership and delegation skills to complete her project. In the process, she learned how to overcome self-doubt and enhance confidence in herself. Finally, Lauren learned that, with hard work and dedication, she could make a lasting difference.

Thank you to all of my community partners, including those at the San Diego County Registrar of Voters, League of Women Voters, and Love City Heights, as well as my incredibly supportive troop leaders, friends, family, and everyone at Girl Scouts San Diego. Without your support, this wouldn't have been possible.



Holly Day

Vapescape

Holly promoted a better lifestyle choice among teens by discouraging electronic cigarette use. Her goal was to encourage them to practice healthy habits now that will set them up for success in the future.

She also helped students start to think

about long term goals and planning, considering how their decision to say no to e-cigarettes can benefit them later on. The main issue underlying teenage e-cigarette use is the social acceptance that it provides for teens. Holly focused on helping teenagers in Lakeside Middle School and in Girl Scouts understand the risks associated with electronic cigarettes as well as how they can engage in a healthier lifestyle to accomplish their goals.

Holly learned valuable leadership skills, as well as the importance of working hard and staying determined, even during a pandemic. While creating presentations, participating in a task force, and synthesizing ideas, Holly learned how to be an effective leader.

I would like to thank Wendie Ward for helping to guide me through this experience, as well as my Gold Award Committee mentor, Cora Long, for sticking with me through all the challenges I faced. I would also like to thank my parents for giving me the support I needed to earn this award.



Nitasha Drake

Educate the Elderly and Children on Health and Gardening

Nitasha lives in a rural environment, far from any grocery stores. When COVID-19 hit her community, she noticed that it was more and more difficult for people to make it to a store for fresh produce. So she created

a gardening club for young students at her local school, Warner Elementary School. She taught the students about health and food sustainability, and provided them with supplies to grow carrots. She also created an easily accessible website with details about growing herbs at home, and planted a sustainable herb garden for the elderly residents of Warner Springs. Her project is now sustained by community members.

Nitasha learned about the importance of community engagement, healthy living, nutritional education, and leadership while working on her project. She also learned that by giving more to others, you will receive the greatest gift of all: friendship.

I would like to give all of my thanks to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Ms. Tiffany Chatham Smith; my project advisor, Chris Laidlaw; my troop leader and mother, Sandra Drake; and all of my friends and family who helped me along. May God bless you all.



Maddie Engblom

It's Our Ocean, Too: Educating Youth on Plastic Pollution

Growing up in San Diego, the beach was Maddie's second home. But it wasn't until she took a Girl Scout Destination trip about Sea Turtle Conservation that she learned that plastics are gravely injuring her beloved ocean and its inhabitants. Thirteen million tons of plastic enter our oceans each year, killing marine life and devastating the health of our planet. Maddie determined that educating the younger generation was the most effective way to create long-lasting change. Undeterred by the pandemic, she created an engaging lesson and virtually taught more than 400 elementary students about the harmful effects of plastic pollution. She encouraged students to make simple changes that have a real and positive impact on our oceans. Maddie successfully collaborated with a curriculum specialist to develop her lesson into a science standards-based educational platform and created a recording available to teachers everywhere. Maddie believes that "when you know better, you do better" and hopes her plastic education program will inspire kids to "do better" for our planet for years to come.

Maddie strengthened her public speaking skills and her ability to be engaging and interactive while presenting virtually via Zoom. She learned to be flexible and gained confidence as she handled a plethora of challenging situations. Maddie realized the importance of effective communication and organization to ensure that her project was successful.

Thank you to Kikki Avila and Surfrider Foundation for guiding me and enhancing my knowledge about the issues of plastic pollution. I would also like to thank Trenace Sevilla from Poway Unified School District; Jennipher Harris, my Gold Award Committee mentor; and all of my friends and family who have encouraged me throughout the process of earning my Gold Award. My project would not have been possible without the love and support of the many principals and teachers who welcomed me into their schools and classrooms with open arms.



Ellie Fox

Coping With Mental Illness Together

Ellie's project was an educational campaign designed to help people better understand mental health issues in her community, specifically among her peers, and to create a positive impact for those who are suffering. She addressed the stresses and situations that cause teens to become depressed and anxious, helped lead discussions, and provided resources and advice. She collaborated with staff at La Costa Canyon (LCC) High School and received advice and guidance from her mentor, Hunter Terrill. Ellie's project helped open the discussion on mental health and guide those in need. Her work will continue through her campaign, which is available online. The impact of this project can be measured through the students' positive reflections and comprehensive understanding of the topics presented.

Ellie learned valuable leadership and community building skills. By discussing the topic of mental health, organizing presentations, and effectively communicating with both adults and peers, she developed a greater understanding of how to help by gathering information and resources.

I sincerely want to thank all those who pushed me, supported me, and encouraged me to accomplish such an amazing project. Specific thanks to my project advisor, Hunter Terrill; my troop leader, Teri Strohm; my Gold Award Committee mentor, Linda Wightman; and LCC staff Randa Espinosa and James Etheridge; as well as all my amazing friends and family, for being there for me on this journey.



Ava Fox

USA Playground Map, Educational Geography Website, and Supplemental Activities

Ava saw a need to enhance geography skills in elementary students. She painted a large playground map of the USA on the blacktop at Christian Elementary School's East Campus. She then created a supplementary

website with developmentally appropriate educational resources for each grade level (K-6). Finally, she designed interactive games and activities, complete with a resource kit of supplies and instructions, to be used on the outdoor map. Her project has made a measurable and sustainable impact in the community. Ava's website and curriculum are available to other schools in the district and include complete instructions on how to replicate the map on other campuses in order to continue to educate children about geography in the future.

Through her project, Ava learned valuable leadership skills by collaborating with educators, teaching games, and leading other activities with students of various age groups. Due to this past year's pandemic, the original plan had to be changed, but Ava quickly adapted.

I am so grateful to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Marilyn Fullen, and my project advisor, Tonya Lee, for helping me develop and improve my project. I would also like to thank principals Terri Clark and Susan Lanz of Christian Unified Schools for allowing me to add a geography curriculum and playground map to the school and for really making my project possible. I am also thankful for my troop leader, Marcia Fox, who really sparked the vision for my project and inspired me to share my love for geography with other kids. Finally, a special thanks to my friend Jada Burke, who assisted me weekly in working with the kids. I am so blessed to have worked with all these amazing women and I am thankful for every single one of them.

sites.google.com/view/goldusamap



Madison Frady

Monarch Butterfly Garden Enclosure

Madison constructed a butterfly habitat enclosure with screened-in walls at the Lemon Avenue Elementary School garden. It serves as a small sanctuary to protect endangered monarch caterpillars and chrysalis from predators. The goal of her project was to help monarch butterflies reach safe population numbers. Madison also worked with several elementary school classes to involve students in environmental sustainability. She taught them about sustainable gardening practices, educated them about how to improve the threatened population of monarch butterflies, and showed them how to build their own monarch butterfly gardens. Madison's project will have a measurable impact over the years as children continue to help raise the monarch butterfly population.

Madison learned time management and planning skills while completing her project.

I would like to thank my father, Ricky, and troop leader, Carly Garrett, for all of their support.



Emma Jane Francis

Financial Independence

Emma created a finance program which addressed the lack of financial stability and knowledge in children and young adults. Emma's project was designed for students in upper elementary and middle school.

Because of COVID-19, her lessons were taught over Zoom, with the help of Junior Achievement. To ensure the sustainability of her project, Emma made videos and published them on YouTube, so people can continue to learn about good financial skills.

Emma developed valuable communication skills through communicating with troop leaders, audiences, and her own team. She also learned leadership skills by teaching and leading her Gold Award project.

I would like to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jen Pernicano; Jacqui Pernicano; Madhu Chandramohan; and my mom for helping and guiding me through my Gold Award journey!

youtu.be/aQhiVC2x-5U



Chrysanthé Frangos

Happy Habitats California

Chrysanthé founded Happy Habitats California. Her organization's curriculum that is available on TeachersPayTeachers (the world's largest online educational marketplace). Happy Habitats teaches California third-grade students an entire

Next Generation Science Standards unit about the environment, adaptations, local and endangered species, animals, ecosystems, and humans' effects on the environment. Students and teachers can also access her lesson plans and videos from home through her website and YouTube channel. Chrysanthé presented her lessons to a third grade class over Zoom and her materials have been downloaded from TeachersPayTeachers more than 100 times.

Chrysanthé became more flexible by adapting her project to cater to the needs of students during the pandemic. She improved her public speaking skills and became more confident in her ability to research, script, film, and edit videos. She learned that if you want to see an improvement in your community, the best way to make it happen is to be proactive and take command.

Thank you to my parents, friends, project team, and project advisor, Sarah Alfano. I would especially like to thank Magdalena Da'Silva and the faculty at Sacred Heart Parish School in Coronado for their kindness and support.

happyhabitatscalif.wixsite.com/website

YouTube: tinyurl.com/46bxes3y



Hannah Fritcher

Outdoor Learning Environment "OLE"

Understanding that not all students learn successfully in the traditional classroom setting, Hannah created an outdoor learning environment for Discovery Elementary School in San Marcos. It is designed for all students, including kinetic learners and those with behavioral disabilities, and accommodates approximately 50 students. The space also includes a game cart for afterschool programs, STEM, and tutoring. Hannah reached out to principals and school districts across the nation to encourage and inspire them to add a similar alternative space to their campuses. As a result, two schools are currently working toward incorporating an outdoor learning environment.

Due to COVID-19 and school closures, Hannah had to redesign her project to fit the school's current needs. This taught her the importance of being adaptable and preparing for the unexpected. The circumstances required dedication and perseverance, and she learned that overcoming obstacles can lead to better outcomes.

I would like to thank my friends, family, volunteers, project donors, the Discovery Elementary School staff, and my former troop leaders, Mrs. Edwards and Ms. Morris. A very special thank you to my mentor, Ms. Galdo, who has dedicated so much of her time helping me to become a better leader and who guided me throughout my Gold Award. Thank you also to my parents, who have always supported me in everything that I do.



Abigail Gant

Not Stressin'

To teach teenagers healthy ways to cope with stress, Abigail educated teens throughout the U.S. via workshops. She started a Not Stressin' Club, where students learn lessons about stress and have opportunities to share their experiences. She also created a PSA video about journaling and a blog explaining the positive mental health benefits that journaling provides. The club will continue at Abigail's high school and the online material will continue to benefit people for years to come.

Throughout the Gold Award process, Abigail learned the importance of communication and delegation. She also discovered her love for helping others. She became motivated knowing that she can make a positive impact in others' lives.

This project would not have been possible without Karly Wardwell, my school counselor and project advisor. Thank you for all of your help. I would also like to thank Suzanne Crane, my troop leader; Jennipher Harris, my Gold Award Committee mentor; and my family for always supporting me and pushing me to pursue my Gold Award.



Madeline Garrett

Medical Play Dolls

Hospitals use medical play dolls to explain procedures to critically ill children. Traditionally, older women make and donate these dolls, and most of the dolls have fair complexions. Madeline designed her project to create a new generation of diverse sewing

hobbyists who can give hospitalized children a better chance of seeing a medical doll that looks like the children. She led a series of sewing workshops to teach high school students with a variety of ethnic backgrounds how to make dolls that reflect more ethnic diversity and skin tones. The sewing club will continue to help students and leaders understand the process and make diverse dolls to donate to hospitals.

Maddie learned public speaking skills, time management, and the importance of being patient when explaining things to new learners. She also learned how to pivot to achieve her goals when faced with major obstacles, such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

I would like to thank my leaders, Alex Hess and Carly Garrett, for pushing me to do this; Abbey Boull't for allowing me to work with her troop; Palomar High School for hosting the club meetings; and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Judy Pritchett, for guiding and pushing me to finish, even after COVID-19 threw me off. I would also like to thank the council for extending the deadline for those of us who had nearly completed their projects when the pandemic hit.



Marion Gates

Lacrosse Ladies

Marion created a website as an outlet for girls in middle and high school to discover and build confidence through lacrosse. Partnering with her local middle and high school lacrosse teams, she also held clinics as a direct way to impact her audience and reach her goal. Marion's website remains publicly accessible to ensure that her project has a lasting effect on her community.

Marion learned many valuable skills while teaching players the fundamentals of lacrosse and taking the leadership role when her team created the website.

I would like to thank many people, including my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tracy Bracht, for guiding me through the whole Gold Award process; my project advisor for taking the time to help me complete my project; and everyone else who helped me make my project a reality.



Thaily Gaytan-Romero

Luz de la Comunidad

Thaily created a summer dance camp for girls in low income communities that included informational lessons about heritage. The girls—ages 7 to 12—practiced dance skills and moves, learned about how they came to be young Chicanas, and

discovered how they can honor their ancestors through dance. Thaily will continue to mentor younger girls as she helps them learn more about their heritage, and will pass down the camp leadership role to younger participants so it can continue on in the future.

Thaily learned how to handle things on her own and how to take leadership into her own hands.

I want to give a big shout out to my mom and dad for always taking me to and from practices with the girls and for helping build the stage. A big thank you to my troop leader, Irene Barajas, for always having my back and pushing me to be the best Girl Scout I can be, and now...a Gold Award Girl Scout!



Elizabeth Gelber

Clairemont High School Girls Empowerment Club

Elizabeth developed the Girls Empowerment Club at Clairemont High School to empower, educate, and nurture girls to reach their fullest potential. Membership is open to all students—regardless of gender—to come

together to discuss issues facing women in the world today and how to make positive changes. She was inspired to create this club because she felt that her school community didn't have any groups that specifically supported girls and taught them how to empower themselves and others. The club held workshops and brought in successful women from the community as guest speakers to strengthen the leadership skills and voices of girls...so club members can go into the world and empower other females.

Elizabeth learned valuable leadership, management, and organizational skills throughout her project. Additionally, she learned the value of educating others and herself to create lasting and positive change in the world, as well as the importance of advocating for others who can't advocate for themselves.

Thank you to Miss Jennifer Dossett and all the club members for allowing me to bring this project to life and offering their endless support and assistance. Thank you to Gold Award Committee member Judy Pritchett for her guidance and mentorship in overseeing my project. Finally, a big thank you to my troop leader and mom, Christine Groves, for her unconditional love and help throughout this project, my 13 years of being a Girl Scout, and all of my life endeavors.



Elizabeth Gerhardt

Choose Life

Elizabeth's project advocated for the unborn in three ways: conducting an educational campaign through movie screenings, holding a diaper drive, and doing a memorial installation. The root cause she identified was a lack of knowledge about alternatives

to abortion. Her target audience included church members, new moms, college students, and the general public. With the help of her project mentor, Elizabeth collaborated with Birth Choice, a pregnancy resource center, for her diaper drive; worked with her church for the memorial installation; and hosted screenings of the movie Unplanned at churches, a public library, and a college class. She also installed a plaque at her church, memorializing babies lost to abortion.

Elizabeth learned valuable leadership skills by organizing and hosting the screening and advertising it.

I would like to thank my project advisor Bernie Montoya, for helping me every step of the way throughout my Gold Award journey and for being equally passionate about my project as I am. I would like to thank Jennipher Harris, my Gold Award Committee mentor, for all of her help, and my parents for keeping me motivated and providing endless support. I appreciate all the help that allowed the project to succeed. God bless!



Sunshine Harris

Help Women of Africa

Sunshine created an educational campaign about the lack of sanitary products women in Africa have access to, eventually inspiring them to help the cause. Many girls in Africa drop out of school and miss out on opportunities for their future when they don't have the products to manage their menstrual cycles. Sunshine presented information about this topic to several Rotary Clubs in her area and created a website and video that will remain on the internet.

Sunshine relied on her public speaking, leadership, and time management skills as she worked on her project, and found that the process improved those skills.

I would like to thank everyone who helped complete this project, but most of all my mom for motivating me the entire time.



Meredith Hunter

Pink Collar Project: Women in Computer Science

In 2018, women earned just 18% of bachelor's degrees in computer science. To increase awareness about this startling gender gap and inspire more girls to pursue an education in computer science, Meredith

made a documentary about the history of women in that field. She told the suppressed stories of women who had been erased from history and showcased some of the amazing women working in that arena today. Meredith shared her documentary with middle school girls and computer science professionals of all ages and posted it online so it can continue to inspire the next generation of computer scientists.

As a woman in computer science herself, Meredith was inspired by the accomplishments of other women in the field and found role models in the women she interviewed. She learned how to approach a large project by focusing on one task at a time.

Thank you to Cora Carmody, Elizabeth Marion, Jenny Stanchak, Katie Ho, and Vicki Duckworth for dedicating your time to this project and for inspiring me. I would also like to thank my family and friends for all their encouragement and support.

youtu.be/Hlo-WAntSaU



Emily Hurley

Allergy Friendly Baking

Emily's project addressed the lack of education about dietary restrictions, as many people are unfamiliar with what intolerances and allergies entail and are uncomfortable offering food to people with dietary restrictions. Teaching young children how to adapt to food allergies is important, so Emily hosted engaging workshops where elementary school students learned how to make allergy-friendly versions of foods that traditionally contain dairy or gluten. With the help of San Marcos Child Nutrition Services, schools in that district changed their menus to accommodate dietary restrictions.

As she integrated her passion for cooking and baking with teaching younger students, Emily refined her leadership skills. She discovered power of continued learning and the importance of adapting to new circumstances.

I would like to give a huge thank you to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Sherri Charter, for always being there for me; my troop leader, Deb Huyfor inspiring me to do my best; and my family for supporting me along the way!



Serena Ingram

Plastic Free Living

Plastic pollution has a detrimental effect on our oceans and marine life. Serena's environmental advocacy project educated the community about the effects of such pollution and how to switch to sustainable alternatives to reduce plastic use. Serena

created a blog and Instagram page, called "Plastic Free Living," that give specific suggestions for shifting dependence on plastic. She also partnered with South Bay Sustainable Communities to conduct presentations at their events. Serena helped more than 300 individuals consider how to reduce their plastic waste. She learned that advocacy changes behaviors and has an impact on the environment.

Serena developed valuable leadership skills—including communication, adaptability, and motivation— and learned that she can do anything she puts her mind to. Being passionate about sustainability and our planet showed her that she can make the world a better place to benefit future generations.

I would like to thank my mom (who also happens to be my troop leader) for pushing me and always being there for me. I would also like to thank my project advisor, Tina Matthias, and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jennipher Harris, for helping make my project come to life.

Instagram: @plasticfreelivinggs

plasticfreeliving.wixsite.com/gogold



Mara Juergensen

Family Connections

Mara created a program to help grandparents and great-grandparents build stronger relationships with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren and spread a love for reading. Grandparents reading children's books were video

recorded so the adults could share the recordings with their grandchildren. This program was designed to help reduce physical and emotional distance, build personal connections, and provide "living legacies" for the families' future generations. To sustain her project, Mara created a step-by-step instruction manual and shared it with senior centers around San Diego.

Through this project, Mara learned how to be an effective leader. She also realized the importance of having a support system and knowing that it takes a village to bring an idea to life.

I would like to thank my project advisor, Betty Mohlenbrock, for supporting me through every challenge that came my way. Thank you to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jennipher Harris, for guiding me and helping me achieve my Gold Award. I would also like to thank my family, troop, and friends for their unending support and love throughout my project. I couldn't have done it without you.



Lana Kabakibi

Virtual Summer Art Classes

Lana gathered a group of 25 of her peers for educational workshops to teach them about San Diego's under-served immigrant youth and their lack of free, easily accessible resources, specifically art lessons. Lana and her team then planned, created, and edited

10 YouTube art tutorial videos, which remain accessible to all. Lana worked with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), who made her videos accessible to their youth participants. She and her team also made art kits for the IRC to distribute. Through her project, Lana worked to unify her community and teach her peers that reaching out to help others is easy.



Jenna Kim

Increasing Awareness on the Challenges Refugees Face in San Diego

Jenna initiated a campaign for an organization called San Diego Refugee Tutoring (SDRT) to raise awareness within her school, the community, and local businesses. She created a pamphlet, sent

letters and emails to over 200 businesses, and was a guest speaker at her school, presenting ways students could get involved with the organization. During the pandemic, she helped organize and deliver fresh food to refugee families in City Heights and was a part of a team that did drive-by free book deliveries during the summer. Through her efforts, 45 new tutors joined SDRT, approximately 50 families received fresh food every other week, and many students received books, which helped to reduce educational gaps and address food insecurity.

Jenna learned how to build community as she spoke to business managers, her school, and community members about SDRT's good work in the community. She also learned to quickly adapt during COVID-19 by helping to organize food and essential item donations and distribute them to families in need.

Thank you to my Gold Award Committee mentor Sherri Charter, project advisor Mimi Lee, and mentor Kris Stone for assisting me through this project. Thanks to my parents for driving me to Girl Scout events for 11 years!



Camryn Kimura

Patient Self-Imaging of the Internal Jugular Vein

After learning that a large percentage of congestive heart failure (CHF) patients are readmitted to the hospital within a month of discharge, Camryn created instructional materials to teach patient self-imaging.

Through a film and pamphlet, high-risk CHF patients can learn to use a portable ultrasound device at home and then video-call their cardiologists to check diuretic medication effectiveness. Despite being miles away, cardiologists can “virtually examine” recently discharged CHF patients who may find frequent doctor visits challenging. Camryn also built a website for physicians to access the films and pamphlets and learn about patient self-imaging.

While creating the numerous drafts of instructional materials necessary for this research-based project, Camryn discovered the importance of dedication and persistence. Inspired by innovation and creativity, she also learned to synthesize and harness her passions to connect with others and work toward a common goal.

I am beyond thankful for the help of my family, friends, mentors, and Girl Scout Troop 5548 for their constant support. Thank you to Gold Award Committee mentor Judy Pritchett, Casey Wahlstrom, Amy Steward, Anna Woerman, Rick and Susan Boreliz, and my parents, Bruce and Kim Kimura. Words cannot describe how much I appreciate all of you.



Lindsey Kurtz

Disaster Preparedness

Lindsey led her team as they informed the community about the importance of having a plan for emergencies. Her presentations included information about different types of disasters, and steps to take before, during, and after an emergency—like donating blood—to help diminish the stress placed on the community if such an event does arise. After her presentations, she provided tools, aids, and additional resources for people to create emergency plans and learn more on their own.

Lindsey discovered that public speaking is not quite as scary as it seems, and she gained a better understanding of how important organization and preparation are when doing projects and presentations. She also strengthened her ability to adapt as situations change.

I would like to thank my wonderful project advisor, Denise Coughlin, for all her advice and expertise; Anne Bader, my Gold Award Committee mentor, for being incredibly supportive and helpful throughout this entire process; and Stephanie Erbe and the Simi Valley Library for providing a location to share my presentation. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their continuous support and encouragement.



Lauren Lakin

It's All About The Kids Club

With the onset of COVID-19, Lauren realized there was a large spike in the number of low-income families that relied on food banks, and there were many high school students that felt disconnected from their community due to online learning. To address these issues, Lauren worked with the founder of It's All About The Kids—a nonprofit that distributes food to families every week—to create a club at Lauren's school that helped organize volunteers, and educated students on food insecurity, community service, and gratitude. Lauren then created an Instagram for the club with links to the club lesson plans she created, volunteer sign-ups, and a guide to starting a food insecurity club for students at other schools.

Through teaching students about an issue she was passionate about, Lauren gained confidence and sharpened her presentation skills. Planning club activities taught her project management and organizational skills. Volunteering at the food bank allowed Lauren to collaborate with others to build a club that fosters a sense of community.

I would like to give a huge thank you to my project advisor (Angela Brannon-Baptiste), my Gold Award Committee mentor (Linda Wightman), my troop leaders (Tami Harelson, Claudette Baker, and Cheryl Shelhamer), and my parents and friends who helped support me and the club. Thank you all for encouraging and inspiring me!

[instagram.com/ccaiatk/](https://www.instagram.com/ccaiatk/)



Megan Laplante

The Bone Marrow Donor Education and Awareness Project

Megan realized that the low numbers of registered bone marrow donors was due to a lack of awareness of the desperate need for registered donors. She addressed this by creating Swab Right 4 Life, a non-profit organization that uses a website and social media platforms to better reach a young adult audience. Megan partnered with DKMS, the largest international bone marrow registry and, with their guidance, hosted registration drives at public sporting events. Megan also set up a virtual drive campaign through DKMS. Her website and the related high school club she founded have left a lasting impact nationwide.

Megan improved on her project management, leadership, and public speaking skills. She learned the importance of reaching out to larger institutions for guidance and inspiration to help build on her vision.

I would like to thank my parents for being so supportive and for motivating me to go above and beyond for this project. I am so grateful for my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jennipher Harris for encouraging me and guiding me through this journey. I would also like to thank the DKMS team. It is an honor to work alongside all of you.

[swabright4life.com](https://www.swabright4life.com)



Carina Lutz
esSTEAM

To mitigate the effects that distance learning and a poor student-teacher engagement can have on young children, Carina created an online STEM tutoring network, accessible for middle school girls of all backgrounds. She used Google Meet to tutor the girls

during weekly sessions and documented the project on a website and Instagram account she created. The blog posts she wrote about helping girls find their voices both inside and outside of the classroom will stay online to keep her project alive for years to come.

Carina learned to keep moving, even when it can feel like there's no light at the end of the tunnel, and to see obstacles as blessings, turning them into lessons. She also improved her leadership skills as she figured out how to lead over an entirely new virtual medium.

I'd like to thank all the girls who signed up for esSTEAM and the amazing tutors who helped me put this project into action. Thank you to Ms. Shaw-Almaraz, Gold Award Committee mentor Cora Long, Carolina Ibanez, and my troop leader (and mom) Angie Lutz for all their help with logistics and motivation throughout the project!

essteam.godaddysites.com

Instagram: @esSTEAM4u



Chloe McGee
Spreading Kindness

Chloe found that the ongoing pandemic was separating us from our community, family, and friends. To address this, she created a series of videos with creative crafts to help students interact safely while promoting the spread of kindness through their communities. Working with Monterey Ridge Elementary School's after-school program and the Casa Hogar Orphanage in Tijuana, Chloe helped spread kindness in today's uncertain climate and provided tools to people in need to help them stay safe during COVID-19. Her project also helped young children gain the knowledge they need to have self-esteem and pass on their kindness on to others. The website she created includes her videos and links to information about the orphanage and what people can do to help.

Throughout her project, Chloe strengthened her time-management and problem-solving skills. She also found a passion for working with younger students and watching them grow and enjoy being able to positively impact their communities.

I am extremely grateful to my parents for their constant support and love; Tracy Bracht, my Gold Award Committee mentor, for always being available for help; and my project advisor, Sara Izquierdo, without whom I could not have completed this project. I would also like to thank my troop leader, Noel Moser, who has constantly supported me throughout my Girl Scout career. Lastly, I'd like to thank Margaret Farrell for her help connecting me to the children at the Casa Hogar Orphanage in Tijuana.



Laine Michaels

Generations Connect

Laine reached the senior community in Del Mar by creating Generations Connect, an organization partnering seniors and teenagers to connect over the phone and in-person (at safe distances). Her goal was to address how lonely quarantine can be

for seniors and to push teens out of their comfort zones to meet someone new. She worked with Del Mar Community Connections (DMCC) to identify seniors who were interested in forming connections with teenagers in Del Mar. Laine sustained her project through her connection within DMCC, by reaching out to other communities with her idea, and by creating an Instagram account to increase the reach of Generations Connect and inspire others to do something similar.

As she created her organization, Laine learned that leadership and perseverance skills are crucial. She worked hard to match seniors with teenagers and learned to push through any roadblocks she faced. She gained social skill and developed her work ethic as she met and worked with amazing people.

First of all, I would like to thank my project advisor, Nicole Holiday, for helping me find the resources I needed for my organization. I would also like to thank my troop for going through this process with me, giving me ideas when I got stuck, and encouraging me to persevere when I got discouraged. I couldn't have done it without all of them!

Instagram: @generationssconnect



Aarya Mishra

Project Self-Defense

To spread a basic knowledge of vital self-defense techniques to her community, Aarya taught several clinics. To make them accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic, she also developed an ongoing blog highlighting life-saving tips regarding spatial awareness, self-defense, and the ethics of protecting oneself. The in-person clinics she held at Pacific Martial Arts' main studio were open to anyone in her community. The curriculum she created will be passed on in her martial arts community, and her blog continues to spread its global reach.

Aarya learned valuable research and presentation skills while developing her self-defense curriculum. She gained more experience as a martial arts teacher through her clinics and learned the importance of relying on her volunteer team to overcome the unexpected obstacles she faced on her Gold Award journey.

I would like to thank my mother for her unwavering support through this journey. I would also like to thank my advisor, Heather Graves, as well as my Gold Award Committee mentor, Anne Bader, for helping me in numerous ways throughout this project. Next, I would like to thank my amazing volunteer team, including Rohan Shinkre, Eli Morris, and Elias Malouf of Pacific Martial Arts—for helping me teach and hold my clinics when my shoulder slipped out of socket. This project wouldn't have been possible without the amazing Girl Scout community and my troop leader, Mrs. Noreen Nepomuceno. Finally, I would like to thank the late Dr. Peter Grootenhuys for inspiring me to become the best martial arts teacher and community leader I could be.

mishrallaneous.wordpress.com



Rheanna Mohedin

Eliminating False Stereotypes About Homelessness

Rheanna worked to eliminate negative and untrue perceptions about homelessness. She started a club at her school so classmates could do volunteer work that would help them get to know and bond with homeless members of their community. She also interviewed homeless and housed members of The Voices of Our City Choir, located in downtown San Diego, and created a video to share their inspiring stories with the world. Her video will continue to educate people about their lives. She worked with the choir, Dignity Delivery, and Jewish Family Service of San Diego to help her achieve her goal of eliminating negative stereotypes and inspiring her classmates and members of the community to help.

Rheanna learned valuable leadership and teamwork skills by encouraging her classmates to join her club and get involved. She also showed great communication and technical skills while interviewing the homeless members of her community and creating the video. Rheanna worked hard to achieve her goals and learned the importance of persistence, hard work, and dedication.

I would like to thank my family for always encouraging me to work hard and speak my mind about the things I am passionate about. I would also like to thank my troop leaders, Mrs. Ringler and Mrs. Yoli, for leading me and inspiring me to achieve my goals since kindergarten. I will always appreciate everything they you have done for me and I am so grateful for all of the amazing experiences they gave me. I would also like to thank my fellow troop members for always being there to support me along the way. I couldn't have done it without them!! Another special thanks to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Cora Long, and my mentor, Beck Amensen, for introducing me to so many amazing people and helping me along this incredible journey.



Lauren Nitahara

Culinary Cooking

Culinary Cooking, Lauren's workshop series, used multi-ethnic cooking to teach tolerance to 10- to 14-year-olds. During 11 classes, each covering a different country, students learned new art projects, cultural trivia, and recipes paired with an instructional video. These workshops catered to the lack of cultural education in America and ultimately aimed to increase tolerance of traditions that may seem foreign and unfamiliar. Lauren worked with chef Teri Newlee through Teri's organization, Eatsies La Jolla. Lauren posted her classes online to sustain the impact of her project. She hopes that students who are exposed to her material perceive cultural differences in a more positive light and increase their cultural tolerance.

Lauren discovered her ability to adapt to unusual situations, including the pandemic. Additionally, she learned how to efficiently manage and coordinate multi-faceted projects and gained an appreciation for all who had to troubleshoot during these unprecedented times.

I would like to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Mrs. Tiffany Chatham Smith, who encouraged me throughout the process and motivated me to complete the project. I would also like to thank Mrs. Teri Newlee, who graciously supported me and my project and without whom I could not have completed the project.

www.eatsieslajolla.com/online-kids-cooking



Katie O'Connell

The Art of Happiness Project

The Art of Happiness Project taught teens how art can positively affect teen mental health during difficult times, such as the pandemic. Studies show that the pandemic has had especially negative effects on students in middle and high school, so Katie

hosted free Zoom classes explaining the science behind the art/teen mental health connection. Guest speakers—including a psychologist, a UCSD art professor, a professional photographer, and a medical physician/artist—gave expert advice on the topic. A simple art project was demonstrated at each session, and teens discussed art and the pandemic. Katie trained members of the Peer Counseling program at her high school to sustain the project. She also created a website that includes pictures and a description of each art project and its relevance to improving mental health, as well as videos of her guest speakers.

Katie found that, after speaking to large audiences every weekend, public speaking became less intimidating and she gained confidence in her skills. She learned that she can have a positive effect on others. She's grateful because sharing her passion for art with others increased their happiness. Katie gained the courage and confidence to advocate for her project to highly-respected community members such as doctors, psychologists, and professors.

I would like to thank Gold Award Committee mentor Tracy Bracht and guest speakers Dr. Barbara Fouts, Dr. Alan Larson, Christina Li, Stan Kim, and Abby Gant for enhancing my project with their knowledge. A special thanks to my mom and sister for their continuous support for my project and in all aspects of my life. I love you!

artofhappinessproj.wixsite.com/my-site



Calista Ordas

Heart in Motion: A Dance Workshop for Children with Disabilities

Calista's love for dance was instantaneous 13 years ago, and her devotion to it persists. Despite her deep admiration for the art, she recognized that dance has an extremely discriminatory history, especially concerning people in the disability community. A lack of education in the dance community led to a lack of proper, accessible studio environments for dancers with disabilities. Calista didn't want dancers to feel they couldn't achieve their full potential because of systematic discrimination, so she initiated the Heart in Motion Workshop, an annual summer workshop for dancers with disabilities. With the Creative Stages of San Diego, a non-profit organization, she trained voluntary aides, educating instructors about individualized learning for children with diverse abilities.

Through this experience, Calista gained knowledge about the dance community and accessibility and insight about herself. She improved her confidence in leadership roles and—especially with the challenges of 2020—learned to be flexible and find solutions.

I would like to first thank my project advisor, Barbara Rinaldo; Creative Stages of San Diego's creative director, Bex Walker; and Gold Award Committee mentor Linda Wightman for supporting me and helping me through every step of this process. In addition, I'm very grateful for all my volunteer aides and the board of Creative Stages for helping my vision for Heart in Motion come to life. A final thanks to my family, friends, and troop members, who have filled my life with much love and support through my many years of Girl Scouting. Love you all.



Sarah Palluconi

Inspiring Poway Unified Through History

Sarah wrote and illustrated a children's book called Poway History: Story of a Child's Life in Poway to teach local third-graders about the history of her city. Her book provides third grade teachers in the Poway Unified School

District (PUSD) with updated information to support their outdated social studies curriculum. The book is also for general audiences who want to learn about the history of Poway. Sarah consulted with the Poway Historical Society, the Kumeyaay Interpretive Center, and PUSD third grade teachers as she wrote her book. It is free online for teachers and has relevant information that may be used for many years to come.

While working with historical interpreters and resource center, Sarah gained skills in research, collaboration, and communication. She also learned how to overcome challenges by working around COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. Finally, Sarah learned the importance of leadership and teamwork skills through her interactions with third grade teachers and students.

Thank you to Mary Shepardson at the Poway Historical Society and Kristin Otto at the Kumeyaay Ipai Interpretive Center for providing me with the historical insight and resources I needed to complete my project. Also thank you to all the teachers, family members, and friends who helped edit and finalize my story. I could not have done it without you!



Karina Parikh

Stick 2 You Wellness Podcast

In an effort to address struggles facing the teenage population, Karina launched a mental health, wellness, and empowerment podcast called Stick 2 You. It aimed to inspire young adults to live a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle, highlighting perspectives

from a high school teacher, life coach, confidence coach, UCSD mindfulness instructor, nutritional food bloggers, high school and college students, and more. Her interviews brought awareness to the importance of self-care in a fun and light-hearted manner. Karina published a lasting website which features links to her podcast, available on global platforms, including Apple, Spotify, and Google.

Karina learned valuable life skills including leadership, collaboration, public speaking, and event organization. By creating a podcast and hosting wellness events, she connected and networked with a variety of people. She specifically gained expertise in facilitating the types of meaningful conversations that build confidence and self awareness in the teen population.

I am eternally grateful for all of the support I have received from family, friends, and listeners while creating the Stick 2 You Wellness Podcast! I especially want to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Ms. Tiffany Chatham Smith, who spent many hours providing infinite guidance; my project advisor, Ms. Emily Myers, who strongly encouraged my endeavor; and my parents, who continue to inspire me to reach new goals every day.

stick2youbusiness.wixsite.com/stick2you

Instagram: @stick2you_



Kaya Patidar

Sports for All

Kaya learned that some children in Mexican orphanages do not have the ability to let out energy or forget about their tough times. Many of them do not have any after-school activities, and many teenage orphans work all day, with no time for fun. Kaya created a sports program for kids ages five-17 at the Rayito de Luz orphanage in Tijuana, teaching them various sports and other outlets to release energy. She also provided sports equipment and created a binder in both English and Spanish so that volunteers can continue to teach the kids how to play games and sports in the future. Because of her program, kids at the orphanage are now excited to play outside and burn energy in a positive way, and volunteers are grateful that the children are motivated and happier throughout the day.



Natalie Patton

Mind, Body, and Mental Health

Natalie worked alongside Erica Rood of Inspire Balance to give young girls a skillset for navigating stress and pressure in their daily lives. By running a series of workshops, Natalie spoke on the importance of sleep, the power of positive thinking, and stress management skills. These topics were then reinforced in biweekly newsletters and a variety of activities, including yoga. This project also helped to motivate Natalie to practice these same skills at a higher level. Her findings and curriculum remain available on her website, which also includes information about how to run a similar workshop, reusable infographics, and Spotify playlists.

Natalie really enjoyed the challenge of creating her own curriculum and being able to adapt it to her changing audience. In addition to expanding on her leadership and presentation skills during the process, she was able to focus on implementing her own healthy habits. All of this has proven extremely helpful during her busy junior year at Pacific Ridge School.

I want to give a huge thank you to Ms. Erica Rood. This project would not have been possible without her. I am so grateful for all of the work we have done together over the years!

nataliepattonn.wixsite.com/tools4success



Anneliese Peerbolte

Gold Award Garden

Anneliese created a beautiful garden and an environmental club at Del Norte High School in order to promote community health, sustainability, social justice, and mental well-being. Her club focused on educating students and community members about

local and national issues and how they can help solve them.

Members wrote articles, made podcasts, signed petitions, and each participated in over six hours of trash pick-ups. By partnering with Del Norte principal Brian Schultz and advisor Lauren DeCaprio, Anneliese was able to adapt her project during the pandemic.

Her garden will remain on the campus and her club continues to meet weekly.

Anneliese learned valuable leadership skills, such as how to lead a team with compromise and open ears. She also learned to adapt to different schedules, stay flexible, and use professional language when coordinating with community members.

Thank you so much to all of my friends, family, valued volunteers, club members, and community supporters for being with me as I watched my project grow and bloom into something beautiful. Your support means the world to me!



Emma Podhorsky

Bee Aware

Emma's Gold Award project addressed the issue of declining bee populations. She educated first- through third-graders at Curie Elementary and Doyle Elementary about the topic and how they can help bees.

Then the pandemic forced her to switch to online teaching. She converted her lessons into a format that was accessible to many more teachers, and eventually taught more than 170 students about the importance of bees and what humans can do to help.

Through this project, Emma grew in a plethora of ways. She learned the necessary skills that are entwined with leadership, such as flexibility, confidence, and organization.

I want to thank David Holway, Nina Podhorsky, Lisa Downard, and Gold Award Committee mentor Judy Pritchett for guiding me through this project. I also want to give a special thanks to Lorna Tillotson. I am so grateful to have had such a loving and kind person by my side for so many years.



McKenna Radley

Crafts for Kids

McKenna's project supported the well-being of children and families who are living at the Ronald McDonald House. Her Crafts for Kids bags provided self-guided, holiday-themed activities and crafts for the children to do on their own time and at their own pace, learning independence and problem solving. Meanwhile, their parents could relax. McKenna created a binder of instructions, samples, and pictures of each craft and activity, so the Ronald McDonald House and other organizations can replicate and sustain her project in the future.

During monthly meetings, McKenna's peer team discussed empathy and the joy they received from helping others. McKenna learned that she likes to be a leader. She learned that she likes to be the one to come up with the Crafts and to be the one to put them together because she liked knowing that the kids had all of the needed materials. McKenna also learned that she has a hard time delegating activities and asking for help, which is an important part of being a leader so it was good for her to practice having to do this.

I want to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tiffany Chatham Smith; my project advisor, Allison Winkler; and my mom for helping and supporting me along my path to receive my Gold Award.



Maitte Rodriguez

Speaking for our Native Pollinators

Maitte held a series of outdoor events and presentations to address San Diego's lack of knowledge about their native pollinators. By introducing people to the native pollinators in our area and teaching them about their importance, Maitte hopes that San Diego can maintain its wide variety of local specimens, known to be one of the largest in the U.S. Her project reached adults and teenagers—who can do something about this issue immediately—as well as children, who can continue the work.

Maitte learned many leadership skills while hosting booths at events. She discovered how to share as much information as possible while still keeping conversations short enough for listeners to retain the information. She also learned many computer techniques while designing a coloring book and brochures that she distributed to increase awareness and education.

I want to give a special thanks to Lisa Cox, a great help and resource who has been a great mentor to me since seventh grade. Special thanks, too, to Irene Barajas, an incredible and helpful leader who wants the best for each and every one of her troop members.



Sara Ros

Zoonotic Disease Awareness

Three of every four new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals. These illnesses are called zoonotic diseases. To combat recurring pandemics by informing the public about this issue, Sara founded the Zoonotic organization.

She created several social media pages and a website to provide easy access to her information, and educated more than 700 people around the world about how to do their part to prevent the next pandemic. Additionally, she partnered with five animal hospitals to teach their clients that pets are a common vector for zoonotic diseases. Sara continues to post on her online platform to promote safety.

Sara plans to continue to educate the public by creating a zoonotic club when she attends Johns Hopkins University.

I would like to thank my family; my project advisor, Molly Wescoat; my Gold Award Committee mentor, Jennipher Harris; and all my past Girl Scout troops and leaders. I wouldn't have been able to achieve so much success without them.

www.zoonotic.xyz



Maya Rosenbaum

Gratitude Journaling to Promote Teen Mental Health and Well-being

Maya ran a successful gratitude journaling awareness campaign to promote teen mental health. She held 11 workshops that reached 180 teens in nine different organizations across four cities and two states. Attendees learned about gratitude journaling and its many benefits and how making it a consistent habit can lead to greater happiness and hope. Maya also created a free, fun, easy, teen-oriented gratitude journal mobile app to motivate teens to journal.

Maya discovered that simple, yet effective, tools can help mitigate big problems. In addition to developing valuable leadership skills, Maya learned to persevere as she learned to create something completely new (a mobile app), overcome obstacles, seek alternatives, and rally partners. She found that persistence, patience, positivity, and empathy were key to her project's success.

My heartfelt gratitude to my project advisor, Ms. Sheri Ironwood, and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Ms. Sherri Charter, for their unstinting support and encouragement throughout. A big thank you to all the amazing people at the nine organizations who helped me with my workshops and letters, and to all my volunteers. I would also like to thank my parents for their unwavering support and faith in me.



Kaila Rosing

Facemasks for the Homeless

The coronavirus is a huge threat. For some, it means no school or work, just staying at home. But, what about those who, because they don't have a home, are in the most danger? They don't have anywhere to go, and they can't quarantine. Kaila realized the

tremendous need for face masks for the homeless. She created a website of educational resources, gave presentations to groups to spread her message, and networked extensively on social media about how to get involved and make a difference. She also collaborated with PATH San Diego to create, gather, and distribute more than 340 facemasks to those in need.

Kaila learned how valuable it is to help other people, and how surprisingly easy it is to reach out and lend a hand. She learned how to sew masks, and also how to get people engaged. Overall, she discovered that every effort makes a difference, no matter how small it may be.

I wish to say a big thank you to Brian Gruters, my project advisor, for making this possible, as well as his team, which distributed the masks. Thank you to all the volunteers, especially my mom, who taught me how to sew and helped me through all the steps of this project.



Anya Sabhnani

The Education and Preparation of Senior Citizens for Emergencies

Anya identified that senior citizens have a lack of awareness of what to do in fires, earthquakes, pandemics, and other emergencies. She took this opportunity to educate and prepare senior citizens, caregivers, and relatives of the elderly for such situations. She conducted workshops with senior homes and organizations, designed and distributed educational flyers, uploaded webinars to YouTube, published a website, and highlighted her work in church newsletters. Anya partnered with numerous organizations, including ElderHelp San Diego, Meals On Wheels San Diego, and the Foundation for Senior Well-Being. Her website and webinars, along with the awareness that her workshop attendees gained, will continue to spread knowledge of emergency preparedness throughout her community and beyond.

Anya discovered her passion for public speaking and hosting workshops. She learned from the seniors as they shared their experiences, developed a sense of satisfaction about her contributions to the community, and became more eloquent and confident.

I would like to thank Ms. Keegan Cheleden, my project advisor; and Ms. Carrie McClellan, my team member from ElderHelp San Diego. I could not have done this without you two. Thank you to Ms. Charlotte Fan at Meals on Wheels San Diego for providing me with a medium to distribute flyers. I would also like to thank Ms. Sarah Benson at The Foundation for Senior Well-Being for the opportunity to share my workshop with seniors internationally. Last, but not least, thank you to my troop and my family for their continued support for my project.

strengtheningsenio.wixsite.com/emergency-prep



Belle Sach

Free Local CPR, First Aid, and Beach + Water Safety Classes and Workshops

Belle found that—due to a shortage of classes and high cost of classes—pre-teens and teenagers were not trained in safety. So she held three free CPR and first aid training courses with the American Heart Association

and two no-cost beach and water safety workshops with the Torrey Pines Lifeguards. Belle also created a CPR, first aid, and lifeguard training PowerPoint that was shared state-wide through the Junior Lifeguards program and made available globally online.

During the middle of her project, Belle had to cancel classes and pause everything for months because of the pandemic and lockdown. Overcoming obstacle helped her learn the importance of planning ahead, managing time well, and staying organized and on task.

I am extremely grateful for my community partners, Beth Sullivan and the Torrey Pines Junior Lifeguards, for being so supportive and helping me complete my project when lockdown hit. Even more than that, I want to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tiffany Chatham Smith, for being with me from the beginning to the very end and knowing she is there for me to this day.



Kathleen Santacruz

Project Ally

Kathleen spread awareness among high school juniors and seniors and college freshmen and sophomores about the oppression of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities. She co-hosted with the National Conflict Resolution

Center a series of virtual workshops about how to become better allies for those communities. She also held a series of workshops over Zoom to educate sixth and seventh grade Girl Scout troops about the importance of voting to women and BIPOC communities in the United States. Her project will have a sustainable impact in her community through a club she created at her high school where students can come together in a safe space and discuss issues that are important to them.

As she educated others about an issue that she was passionate about, Kathleen learned more about it, as well as her own capacity as a leader and a teacher. She also gained a new confidence in her abilities that she will be able to utilize in future projects.

I would like to thank Gold Award Committee mentor Judy Pritchett for being there for me throughout my project, as well as my Girl Scout troop leaders for supporting me unconditionally through the ups and downs of my project. I would also like to thank my mother for always believing in me in all that I set out to do.



Ava Sargent

Letters To Strangers—TPHS

Ava started the Letters to Strangers chapter at Torrey Pines High School. Each month, members wrote letters to help people combat the issue of loneliness during the pandemic.

Ava collaborated with organizations like St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, YMCA: Tommie's Place, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, North County Lifeline, and Operation Gratitude. Each of these organizations distributed the club's letters to people facing adversity during this time and to military troops stationed across the U.S. and overseas. The Letters to Strangers club will be sustained by fellow students when Ava graduates.

Ava learned valuable leadership skills when she lead her club meeting and volunteer events. She also gained great management skills when planning the club's monthly activity. Lastly, she found communication skills when speaking to people at the organizations she worked with.

I would like to thank my troop, which supported me throughout my whole Gold Award project. I would also like to thank all the members in the club who helped me reach my goals!



Tegan Schlosser

Suicide Prevention Through Kindness

Tegan found that parents and high school students lacked a resource to efficiently educate themselves about the signs of suicide and its risk factors. She crafted a lasting video presentation about how to reach out to loved ones about this sensitive topic. She then visited virtual classroom meetings of high school students at San Dieguito High School Academy and the San Diego Jewish Academy, presenting her project and video. Tegan also created over 50 kits for members of the Encinitas community so they could paint on rocks messages about suicide prevention and spreading kindness.

Tegan learned valuable organizational and time management skills by coordinating her virtual presentations and rock kit project. Overall, Tegan now understands the importance of brainstorming, listening to others, being accountable, and—above all—spreading kindness in all that she does.

Thank you to Dr. Celeste Barnette, my ever-encouraging school liaison, for creating respectful content, and Gold Award Committee member Tiffany Chatham Smith, my guiding compass. I would also like to thank my parents for their motivating spirit, and to send love to all families who have lost a loved one to suicide. This project is for you all.



Samantha Scotchlas

Females Forging Future Females

To address the insecurities held by teenage females who compare themselves to males in their professional pursuits, Samantha founded the Female Empowerment Club and mentoring program at Scripps Ranch High. She hosted 26 club meetings, interviewed

seven female leaders, and planned and hosted seven motivational workshops, in partnership with Air Force Junior ROTC and the Scripps Ranch Public Library. She also created and shared her timeless online library of female leader interviews, which the Female Empowerment Club now maintains. Her event attendees and online viewers have grown in confidence and courage, knowing that they can achieve their goals.

Samantha gained confidence and leadership, networking, public speaking, and interviewing skills.

I would like to thank Gold Award Committee mentor Tiffany Chatham Smith, project advisor MSgt Ferdinand Toledo, Scripps Ranch High College and Career Manager Ginger Colletto, Female Empowerment Club staff and volunteers, and the female leaders I interviewed. I could not have undergone this journey alone and am beyond appreciative for the opportunities and support you have given me.



Dillan Selitsch

Spreading Sports Safety Awareness

Dillan put on a sports safety clinic at San Marcos High School for the youth in her community. Its topics included why sports safety is important; how to fall correctly, so as not to injure yourself; when to go to a hospital after being injured; what a concussion is and how to prevent and treat them; and when to wear sports safety equipment. Her project remains sustainable through her Instagram account and pamphlets. Youth are now more aware of the hazards of playing sports and have the knowledge to stay safe and avoid injuries while they do what they love.

Dillan learned valuable leadership and management skills. She also gained a passion for helping others.

I want to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Ms. Bader; my troop leader, Mrs. Titus; and my project advisor, Ms. Harris, for all the support. I also want to thank my family and troop for inspiring me to complete the Gold Award.

@sportssafetyawareness



Judith Sperry

Time to Talk

When Judith's grandmother became afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, Judith experienced fear and uncertainty. She also saw a need for resources that would assist adults to educate children and teens Alzheimer's disease and its impact. To help other families

communicate during this difficult time, Judith created presentations and partnered with Alzheimer's San Diego on an educational video titled "Time to Talk." The video covered national and global medical research about Alzheimer's, the optimal ways to communicate with teens and children about this disease, and suggestions for how families can cope and navigate through this very difficult time. Caregiver workshops and family support groups will be able to use the video for years to come.

Judith discovered the impact that one person can have in a community. She became a persistent leader, overcoming her fears of speaking to adult audiences, and increasing her self-confidence. Judith learned the power of her own voice and her ability to make a difference.

I would like to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Linda Wightman; Tersh Raybold; my family; friends; and troop leaders Yolanda Furlow and Amy Ringler. They have supported me beyond measure in my endeavor. I would especially like to thank Suzanne Cadwallader, who played an instrumental role in helping me bring to life my project and for always pushing me to strive for the upper limits that I did not know I could reach.



Vanessa Sullivan

Recess In a Box

Since COVID-19 impacted the amount of outdoor activity children should get, Vanessa created 150 boxes that provided second- and third-graders at Marshall Elementary School with "recess at home." Through her project, she also promoted philanthropy among her peers. Each "Recess in a Box" included items donated by Heart Rate Monitors USA and the city of Chula Vista, community members, and friends and family. The presentations she gave were met with positive feedback; elementary students learned the importance of outdoor play, and the young philanthropists now have a newly sparked interest in giving back. She provided a "how to create your own 'in a box' project" guide to Marshall Elementary so her project can be sustained.

As she scheduled meetings with teachers and coordinated with volunteers, Vanessa developed her project management skills. She learned to become more flexible and take full leadership.

First, I would like to thank my mom, grandma, and aunt, who supported me throughout my project and loved me with each and every step I took. I would also like to thank my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tiffany Chatham Smith, for helping me with my project and my troop leader, Lillian Harvey, who led me on my path to being a Gold Award Girl Scout. All of you gave me the determination to complete my project, and for that I will forever thank you.



Carolyn Sutton

Project Hope and Health

In the United States, one in five teens and young adults suffer from mental health stressors that affect their everyday lives, developing into major mental wellness issues, such as serious anxiety and depression. Carolyn created "Project Hope and Health" to support, inspire, and educate teens about the importance of their own social and emotional well-being, especially during stressful times. Carolyn sends out positive affirmations, shares mental wellness tips and resources, and creates a safe and hopeful space for struggling teens with her website and Instagram platform. She also partnered with other local groups, including Community Alliance for Healthy Minds, in their journeys to address teen mental wellness. Carolyn has created a curriculum of mental wellness resources that is easily and indefinitely accessible, and has made a lasting difference in the community, one teen mind at a time.

Carolyn learned that social-emotional self-care in teens is critical in our society, particularly during times of trauma. She improved her leadership and communication skills by working with community partners. Her greatest insight came from learning how to make necessary change, even during a pandemic, with the help of social media.

Thank you to Gold Award Committee mentor Judy Pritchett and Girl Scouts San Diego for their support and guidance. I would also like to thank my wonderful project advisor, Michelle Clarence, for connecting me with other wellness activists in the community and for all of her invaluable advice. Thank you to Shenglana Lo and members of the Community Alliance for Healthy Minds for allowing me to be a youth activist for CAHM and supporting Project Hope and Health. Thank you to my parents for all of your continual love and motivation. I could not have done it without you! Finally, thank you to all my friends and fellow troop members for "being there" in so many ways!

projecthopeandhealth.wixsite.com/website



Nicole Swallow

Memorable Photography

Nicole put her photography and conversation skills into action by addressing the issue of senior loneliness. Through her interactive community program, Memorable Photography, she increased her community involvement and compassion for others. She and her youth volunteers communicated with more than 40 seniors, asking the adults to share their most memorable moments. Nicole then captured an artistic photo that best embodied each senior's memorable moment and delivered it with a personalized letter. She connected with non-profit organizations, including the House of Peru San Diego, to reach a diverse group of seniors from all over the world. Nicole is continuing this project with Meals on Wheels through its Companionship Calls Program.

Nicole learned to maneuver through the challenges of Covid-19 to safely reach her target audience. Through each interaction, she enriched her communication skills and remained steadfast, achieving her goals via virtual technology and interaction. Nicole learned to truly connect with people by listening carefully.

A special thanks to my family, who were my cheerleaders along the way; to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Judy Pritchett, for her amazing feedback; to my project advisor, Carlos Mozombite, for his support; and to Gina Gonzalez at Meals on Wheels, who helped me expand my ideas. Most importantly, a huge thank you goes to the seniors, whose beautiful stories inspired me to grow into the Girl Scout I have become.



Emerson Takata

Oral Family History Interviews

Emerson conducted interviews with 15 elderly members of her community as a way to reconnect the young and old generations, and in hopes of reminding families of the importance of being proud of their heritage. Each interviewee answered roughly 60 questions. She also interviewed a couple of seniors on the East Coast, which she met via Zoom— and residents of The Cove Rehabilitation Center. Her project is sustainable, as she provided the families with videos that they can share with future generations.

Emerson learned how important family history is in preserving relationships. She also learned how remembering your past helps you reflect on your life and the choices you made along the way. She says she was humbled by her experience of learning from those who have lived through momentous events in history.

I would like to take a moment to appreciate Ms. Sherri Charter, my Gold Award Committee mentor, who stayed very patient through the challenging times of the pandemic and helped guide me through the process of this project. I couldn't have completed this without her help. I would also like to thank my family, especially my Mom, who suggested this idea to provide families with a way to stay connected as time goes on. Thank you again!



Allison Mariko Tanita

Little Local (or Not So Local) Library

Allison's project is a community outreach program designed to bring literature to underserved parts of her community. She set out to make a difference by constructing a self-cycling library shelf and recording audiobooks of all levels and multiple languages on an easily scannable QR code. Allison's project specifically targeted small children, seniors, and anyone without direct access to a library or the ability to shop at a bookstore. The Harbor Pointe Community Center aided her endeavors by providing a location to hold socially distant book readings. The permanence of the structure and the internet availability of the audiobooks provide this project with a measurable and sustainable impact.

Through her Gold Award project, Allison learned essential time management and communication skills that will aid her in all future endeavors. She has come to understand the rewards and fulfillment that come from community outreach.

I would like to thank Jen Baer, Gold Award Committee mentor Cora Long, my parents, and my friends, who helped me make this project come to life.



Jaddin Thomas

Without Limits

Jaddin's project, "Without Limits," breaks down the walls of pursuing a passion. Through fun activities, she shared with elementary students at the Boys and Girls Club how they can follow the principles of the law of attraction to become their "dream selves." Jaddin also created another six-week course for middle schoolers in National City, diving deeper into how the law of attraction can impact their future personal and professional ambitions. To conclude the program, she organized a panel of successful professional individuals from National City to inspire and educate the students.

Jaddin learned many skills as a teacher, mentor, and event planner, including persistence and communication. Her biggest lesson is that the best things in life are always the things you work hardest for.

I would like to thank all my students, who supported me as much as I wanted to support them, and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Ms. Judy Pritchett, who guided me through this process. I'd also like to thank my project advisor, Ms. Sommer Cartier, who accommodated any questions I had, and my mom and family, who never stopped believing I could do this!



Alyssa Toledo

Get Informed! Learn a Skill! Coronavirus Education and Self-Reliance Skill

Through a series of online workshops, Alyssa successfully educated people about how to act responsibly during a pandemic and how to sew a face mask. The majority of audience members were youth and children in grades three through 12. She collaborated with the Life Changers International Ministries organization to reach out to her target audiences in Japan. Her workshops are posted online.

Alyssa discovered the struggles and triumphs of being a teacher through her project. She also improved her communication and collaboration skills through her work with children and their supervisors.

Thank you to my Gold Award Committee mentor, Tiffany Chatham Smith, for her constant support and guidance throughout my entire project. I'd also like to thank my troop leader, Vanna Neal, and my community partner, Tacoma Anderson, for all the help they gave me with my Gold Award. Lastly, I'd like to thank my parents. I couldn't have made it through my project without them.



Toria Tolley

It's Your Special Spooky Day

Toria promoted the importance of giving every Patrick Henry High School (PHHS) student a chance to be involved in spirit activities. She felt that there were stereotypes and a lack of information that prevented special needs students from

being included. Toria enlisted students and family members to sew, purchase, and create costumes for special needs students who wanted to participate in the "It's Your Special Spooky Day" spirit activity. She also worked with a group of special needs students to perform at the school's talent show. Unfortunately, the show was cancelled due to COVID-19. To further connect, she made personalized videos for each student. She also created a website that encourages inclusiveness, promotes the theme that "It's Okay to be Different," and gives tips and tools for other schools to host their own inclusive spirit activities. Toria supported her goal of making everyone feels special at high school by providing instructions on implementing additional spirit activities, communicating with PHHS ASB members, and creating a website that promotes inclusion.

Toria gained valuable experience overcoming major obstacles. Her dedication to ensuring that everyone feels included and involved did not end with the spirit activity. When quarantine began, Toria reached out to as many of her classmates as possible by phone. She left special messages and scheduled dance sessions via Zoom.

I want to thank my mom for supporting me through the entirety of the Gold Award process. She is always my biggest cheerleader. I want to thank my grandma, Mimi, for helping me sew the costumes. Additionally, I want to thank the PHHS staff for helping to make my Gold Award happen. Lastly, thank you to Tiffany Chatham Smith for being an amazing Gold Award Committee mentor.

choosetoinclude.weebly.com



Julia Torres

High School Uniform Resale Events

In order to address the issue of increasing financial demands at her school, the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, Julia organized a biannual event that offers uniforms to her school community at over 70% off the retail price. The initial event assisted more than 100 families across many income levels and raised over \$4,500 to purchase items not available for resale. The remaining proceeds were used to establish a special fund earmarked for those needing uniform assistance in the future. To ensure the event was sustainable, Julia created a binder outlining all the steps taken and the materials required. A school club now uses the binder to organize the event.

Julia learned the value of having a strong, reliable team; how to lead with perseverance; and how to reach a large school community during a pandemic. She discovered the true joy of giving back to those in need and how others appreciate the effort she and her team put forth.

I would like to thank my family for supporting me through this process; my project advisor, Mrs. Hooper for being helpful and adaptable; and Ms. Fullen, my Gold Award Committee mentor, for improving my project through many discussions.



Valerie Ying Tran

Incorporating Creativity through a Calligraphy Club for Young Adults

Valerie fostered a calligraphy club at her high school, creating weekly lesson plans with the aim of inspiring fellow students who may otherwise have felt too stressed or busy to incorporate creativity into their lives. She

is confident that, in the future, members of the club will continue running it.

Valerie learned about the importance of initiative, and that change is possible with dedication and hard work. She learned how to become a better and more patient mentor for those who sought her help.

Thank you to everyone who supported me throughout my journey towards this project: my Gold Award Committee mentor, Ms. Pritchett, for answering all my questions; my project advisor, Ms. Addleman, for being so eager to support my project; and my family, which kept me going throughout this project. Finally, thank you to my friends, the backbone of my project, for being willing to learn and support my plans.



Della Trupp

Continuing Music in College Workshop

Della led a workshop at her high school to educate students about continuing music when they go to college. To address the issues of equity, unknowns within the application and audition processes, and lack of preparation, Della and her team shared

success stories, insights, and pro tips for success with students who wanted to continue pursuing music. She also created a handbook about how to lead her workshop, and shared it with 15 schools in Southern California.

Della problem-solved by working through the challenges that she faced, and communicated with presenters, attendees and band directors all over southern California. She also planned and organized a workshop, a handbook, and a presentation.

I would like to thank my band director, Dr. Jennifer Kitelinger, for supporting me in this project and beyond. Most of all, I'd like to thank my mom, Carla Trupp, who is also my troop leader. She put me in Girl Scouts in kindergarten and has supported me unconditionally ever since.



Aishani Vora

Financial Literacy

Aishani realized that a lack of interest and opportunity were keeping teenagers from learning essential money management skills. To address this issue, she created and conducted multiple interactive workshops for middle and high school students, covering the basic principles of finance. Aishani partnered with the Jain Society of San Diego to further spread the message to its members. For those who could not attend her workshops, she developed a financial literacy website with the same and additional information. Furthermore, Aishani created a Finance and Investment Club at her high school to continue her goals in the future, ensuring that teenagers have the skills to be financially literate and independent.

Aishani strengthened her leadership and public speaking skills throughout her project, especially when networking and conducting her workshops. In addition, she learned the importance of problem-solving and organization skills and was able to utilize them to have a successful project.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me throughout my project, especially my project advisor, Subodh Rai, and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Linda Wightman. I also want to thank my friends and family for their continued support and encouragement throughout this journey, as I could not have done any of this without them.



Esha Walia

Advocating for ALS

Esha's involvement with the ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) Association Greater San Diego Chapter began in 2014, following the passing of her grandmother from this fatal disease. Esha created Passes for PALS (People with ALS), an outreach program for ALS patients and their families. Before the pandemic, she hosted an event at the San Diego Zoo, meeting with ALS patients and their families and providing them with complimentary tickets, snacks, T-shirts, and thank-you notes. After the pandemic struck, she completed the second aspect of her project, creating a spreadsheet that includes information about all 39 ALS chapters in the U.S. The National ALS Association is now using the document.

Esha appreciated the opportunity to honor her grandmother and spend valuable time with ALS patients and their families. Speaking with patients, families, and staff members at the zoo enabled her to branch out and learn effective communication.

A huge thank you to my project advisor, Steve Becvar, and my Gold Award Committee mentor, Linda Wightman, for guiding me through this project. I would also like to thank Eric Andrews, Lindsay Kerns, Keith Miller, and LeeAnn Casey of the ALS Association Greater San Diego Chapter, as well as my family, my troop, my troop leader (Kathy Ryan), and my friends, for all of their support and assistance with my project.



Hope Weng

Torrey Pine Trees

Hope realized that people are unaware of the consequences of climate change on Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, so she partnered with California State Parks and Recreation, Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, Emily Tianshi, Scripps

Assist, San Diego State University, and I Love A Clean San Diego to make a difference. She organized a group of people from diverse backgrounds to share their expertise on how to battle climate change, then used online lessons to educate the public, sister Girl Scouts, and school students of all ages. She translated the information she had gained from these classes into visual posters and a website that explain the effects of drought and climate change on our rare Torrey Pines and other pine trees.

Hope has gained the ability to be flexible and organized, traits that she considers essential to earning the Gold Award. And on top of that, kindness is the most desirable quality in a scout. Even when challenged by COVID-19 restrictions, she kept developing her project and maintained a kind and cheery demeanor.

The path to my Gold Award was not an easy one, especially since I followed it during a pandemic. I could not have done this without the help of family and friends who have always believed in my crazy ideas and supported my wildest dreams. I also could not have done this without my wonderful Gold Award Committee mentor, Sherri Charter!



Charlotte Wiggins

Intersectional Environmentalism for the Modern Generation

Charlotte developed curriculum based around environmental education for use within student and teen communities. Her main focal point was intersectional environmentalism, the importance of diversity within activism. She held educational seminars in association with Avritah (a prominent non-profit organization focused on climate activism) and local, student-led environmental clubs. Attendees gained valuable information regarding the topic and participated in discussions related to the climate crisis and emerging efforts in sustainability. The seminars' resources and curriculum, along with a community platform that encourages open conversation and education within teen activism, are available on the Avritah website.

Although it was intimidating at first, Charlotte learned how to become a leader by stepping out of her comfort zone and directing a community of older professionals. She improved her time management skills and responsibility throughout the course of her project and can now confidently advocate for herself and others.

Thank you to all of the incredible women who contributed to my project—including Anushka Bhaskar and Gold Award Committee mentor Tiffany Chatham Smith—for being excellent role models and mentors who were always available to help. Thank you to my troop members and best friends who have supported me since kindergarten, and my Great-Aunt Constance, who inspired me to be a Girl Scout many years ago.



Daniela Zoni

Feeding Our Community's Pets in Need

Daniela saw a need for dog and cat food for people who visited her local food pantry. In partnership with the San Diego Humane Society, she established the Bethlehem Pet Pantry at the Good Shepherd Ministry Center. Now, the most vulnerable pets in East County have access to food to keep them strong and healthy.

Daniela developed many leadership skills that were critical to her project. She discovered the importance of building new relationships and collaborating with different community partners. Additionally, Daniela learned the importance of flexibility when she had to modify her presentations for 2020's virtual environment.

Thank you to my project advisor, Susan Naslund, who worked with me every step of the way; my supportive Gold Award Committee mentor, Linda Wightman; and my devoted troop leader of 12 years, Jeni Bernatz. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for all of their support throughout my Girl Scout journey.



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