



Earned when she is in grades 9-12, the Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award a Girl Scout can achieve. This prestigious award is earned by a select group of Girl Scouts who demonstrate a high commitment to improving their communities and advocating for lasting change.

2015 Recipient



Lauren chose this project because she is an equestrian with a deep love for horses and a passion for life sciences. Knowing that equine therapy is extremely beneficial for many types of illnesses, Lauren decided to share her knowledge of riding and horsemanship by creating a manual for a five day camp and an after-school program for children. The focus of Lauren's project was to help children, especially those with mental and physical disabilities, build confidence and skills through understanding and interacting with horses. As a result of her project, Lauren has a better understanding of how to use her leadership and teamwork skills to take initiative, reach out to community leaders to understand social issues, and develop a plan to make improvements in her community.

Lauren is a member of the National Honor Society, Tri M Musical Honor Society and is a flute player in the Algonquin Regional High School Wind Ensemble. She has earned the Holy Cross Book Award for Academics and is in the top 5% of her class. She has been a Girl Scout since the second grade and was a town encampment aide for five years. Lauren is also a hunter jumper equestrian rider and member of the Century Mill Stables Interscholastic Equestrian Team. Lauren has been accepted into the pre-med program Boston College.

Lauren McKenna
Troop 30478
Brightening Horizons
through Equine Therapy and
Education

2014 Recipients



For Bridget's Gold Award project, she put together three different healthy-eating presentations for elementary school kids focusing on how to make healthy decisions and changing their eating habits in order to become healthier. The project targeted young kids due to their pliability and acceptance of new ideas. If they grow up with healthy eating ingrained in their minds, they will pass their knowledge onto the next generation. Each presentation was geared toward one of the following age groups: kindergarten-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, or 4th-5th grade. The teachers and students benefited from the presentation, because they learned new healthy eating skills. The goal when working on the project was to address the growing problem of obesity and type-two diabetes. Bridget's family members who struggle with their weight and type-two diabetes led her toward this project. Education materials are accessible on www.healthynorthborough.org for anyone to use in the future, and were also given to the cooking teacher at her local school. In the future, Bridget plans on continuing to help educate elementary school kids about the importance of healthy eating whether it is close to school or around Northborough.

Bridget has been a Girl Scout for 13 years with her mom as her Girl Scout leader and earned the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award. Attending Camp Bonnie Brae for two years as a camper, Bridget enjoyed canoeing down the Connecticut River and learning how to sail and scuba dive. During high school, her troop raised the money to go to Saint John, U.S.V.I. for a week during the summer and enjoyed the outdoor experience while also raising money through the cookie program to go on a Destination trip last summer to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. This was an unforgettable experience with many friends and amazing eye-opening experiences such as volunteering at a home for adolescent mothers. Bridget is an active member in her church as an altar server and a member of Young Neighbors in Action. Bridget is a member of National Honor Society and Tri-M Music Honor Society as well as the captain of the Algonquin Regional High School track and field team. Next year, Bridget will attend Villanova University's School of Business as well as compete on their Division 1 track and field team as a pole vaulter.

Bridget Owen
Troop 30482
Healthy Food is Fun



Alyssa Pfannenstiel
Troop 30482
Community Advocate

Having suffered a severe concussion that had a huge impact on her life, Alyssa decided to focus on concussion awareness and support. She created a Facebook page called Conquering Your Concussion which seeks to provide information and support to athletes and their families about concussions. Along with the Facebook page she also created a blog sharing a personal struggle suffering with a concussion in hopes of connecting with others struggling in similar situations. Alyssa was able to speak to different groups including boys' and girls' high school sports teams, coaches of local town teams, parent committees for elementary schools and at the superintendent meeting of the Northborough/Southborough School district increasing awareness to athletes and families about the essential aspects of life that need to be addressed when dealing with a concussion. A great accomplishment was having reached over 150 "likes" on the Facebook page and over 380 views of the blog from 10 countries. Despite being done with her project, Alyssa continues to speak to various organizations about concussions and left behind an informative PowerPoint presentation for the high school's athletic department to show to future athletes. One of Alyssa's favorite moments was working with her peers and getting to share a side of her that most people never knew and hearing amazing stories from the people she has spoken with has taught her something rather than her teaching them.

A favorite memory from Alyssa's Girl Scout experience is running events for younger girls in the town including putting on the Annual Talent Show and an event for the 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouts. In school, Alyssa is in the National Honor Society and is heavily involved in community service through her church. A favorite service trip was Habitat for Humanity in Delaware and Camp Sunshine, a camp for children with terminal illnesses. Alyssa also works at a veterinary hospital and next year, will attend Simmons College in Boston where she'll major in Public Health on a Pre-Vet plan. Simmons College is an all-girls college and she is proud to say that Girl Scouts may have had some influence on showing her what it is like to interact and grow with strong and talented girls.



Ariel Thompson
Troop 30482
Peaceful Prayers and Playful Pals

Ariel is heavily involved in her local parish and was motivated to choose a project in which she could give back to the parish community. Her Gold Award project addressed the lack of a safe and clean environment for young children to play in during Mass and after-school programs. The parish had a dirty, old and seemingly neglected playroom that needed improvements. After creating a new floor plan, soliciting donations and working to start a free Mass-time care program, a renovated bright, friendly, safe and clean playroom was created. The final renovation of the room consisted of a new area rug, new paint, bible quotes and doves painted on the walls, donated toys, donated craft supplies, coloring books, markers, etc., and a set of rules, regulations and other paperwork. Both the parents and children love the new play area. When the room first opened to the public, one little girl said that it was her favorite room in the whole church! The grand opening was held after Sunday Mass and helped to encourage teens who were looking for a fun way to volunteer an opportunity to do so. The project is not only beneficial, but also fun.

Since her freshman year in high school, Ariel is a dedicated member of her parish's Young Neighbors in Action program, volunteering in Worcester, Wilmington, DE, and as a camp counselor at Camp Sunshine in Maine. Ariel is currently the senior leader of the parish's youth group and was able to travel to Indianapolis for the National Catholic Youth Conference. In school, she is a four-time member of the Mock Trial Team, two-year captain, and participates in the National Honor Society and Tri-M Honor Society. Ariel has been a Girl Scout since first grade, which definitely sparked her love of serving others. Some all-time favorite memories of Girl Scouts are indoor rock climbing in Vermont, zip-lining in New Hampshire, camping at West Point and kayaking in Saint John, US Virgin Islands. Ariel's passion for helping others influenced her decision to study chemical engineering in the fall at Villanova University.



When Elizabeth discovered that our world has a real imbalance of access to nutritious food and food information, she knew it was time to take action. She believes everyone deserves a healthy and reliable source of food. Elizabeth learned that the Northborough Food Pantry had no easy, reliable way to communicate with the clients at the pantry. Volunteers found themselves repeating information and they weren't always sure that everyone got the information. Also, many parents came to the pantry with young children who had little to do. The entry to the pantry had some posters, but they were messy and made the pantry a less welcoming place. Elizabeth changed this by putting in a community bulletin board, whiteboard, new shelves and books for children, as well as helping the pantry with other needs. The books and news boards will continue to educate the clients and provide a welcoming atmosphere. In the future, Elizabeth wants to continue fighting the problems in our society that lead to hunger and resource imbalance in whatever way she can.



Elizabeth Wig
Troop 30478
Helping the Northborough
Food Pantry

Elizabeth has been a Girl Scout for 11 years and completed her Bronze, Silver, and now Gold Award. She is a high school junior and co-president of her school's Global Learning Initiative Club, which helps to promote equal education to everyone around the world. Her other extracurricular activities include the American Red Cross Club, National Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, Math Team and the cross-country team. Elizabeth also continues to volunteer at the Northborough Food Pantry where she completed her Gold Award project. Because of Girl Scouts, Elizabeth learned not only about the world's problems – but also that they can be fixed and it doesn't have to be difficult. All that is needed is enough knowledge to be aware of current issues, the ability to recognize possible solutions and enough caring to try to fix them.