



## News Release

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### Jessica Bynum receives Girl Scout Gold Award... the highest individual achievement in Girl Scouting

**Glen Carbon, Illinois** -- The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (GSSI) is pleased to announce that Jessica Bynum from Shiloh has earned the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can receive.

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Jessica planned an "Operation Baby" program at St. Johns Mercy Medical Center's Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit. During Operation Baby, Jessica conducted four siblings classes for brothers and sisters of NICU patients and made twenty-five fleece blankets to cover NICU incubators. In addition, she put together 15 baskets for NICU mom's that contained blankets, outfits, diapers, wipes, baby bottles and pacifiers. She also made 20 gift bags for older siblings that contained reading books, coloring books, crayons, puzzles and a t-shirt.

"Be the change that you want to see," is how Jessica felt of completing her Girl Scout Gold Award project. She added that it's very rewarding to know that she was able to use her goal setting, organizational skills and confidence to complete her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

Jessica, a senior at Belleville East High School, is the daughter of Kevin and Roxanne Bynum.

The Girl Scout Gold Award recognizes a Senior Girl Scout's commitment to excellence as she develops skills and values to meet present and future challenges in her life. To earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, a Senior Girl Scout

must design and carry out a plan of activities covering community service, career exploration, specialized interest projects, and leadership skills. The project must be completed with at least 65 hours of work. Only about 5 percent of eligible girls earn the prestigious Gold Award.

Today's Girl Scouts not only enjoy camping and crafts, but they also explore math and science and learn about diversity, good citizenship, leadership and teamwork. Girl Scouting is the place where girls experience the fun, friendship and power of girls together.

It's been 98 years since the first Girl Scout troop meeting, and Girl Scouting has evolved from 18 members to more than 3.5 million nationwide. Today, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. is the largest voluntary organization for girls in the world. Its sole focus is to meet the needs of all girls (ages 5-17) from diverse racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

After returning to the United States from England, Juliette Gordon Low made a historic phone call to her cousin in March 1912, "Come right over! I've got something for the girls of Savannah, all America, and all the world, and we're going to start it tonight." The "something" was Girl Scouts, and the first group of girls embarked on Gordon Low's vision. Low was determined to help expand opportunities and learning for the average American girl. At a time when many girls' paths in life were limited to their social standing, Low's vision was to establish an organization where any American girl could expand her personal horizon by having fun, while exploring new interests and contributing to society.

The mission of Girl Scouting states: ***Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.*** Girl Scouts is the world's pre-eminent organization dedicated solely to girls - all girls - where, in an accepting and nurturing environment, girls build character and skills for success in the real world. In partnership with committed adults, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives - like strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth.

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Girl Scouting has inspired more than 50 million girls and women since its founding in 1912. As we approach the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Girl Scouting, councils nationwide are joining in a historic organizational transformation centered around the best leadership development experience for girls in the 21st Century, while ensuring the traditions and values that have been core to Girl Scouting since its beginning remain strong and relevant.

The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a not-for-profit organization supported by various United Ways throughout the region. The Girl Scouts is a Proud Partner of United Way. For more information, please call Jay Strobel at 618.692.0692 or Tricia Higgins at 618.242.5079.

**Also check us out at: [www.gsofsi.org](http://www.gsofsi.org)**

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