



# Girl Scout Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award for girls in Girl Scouting, recognizes leadership, effort, and impact that Girl Scout Senior and Girl Scout Ambassadors have had on their communities. Only about 5 percent of eligible girls take the rigorous path toward earning this prestigious award, but those who complete the journey, change the lives of others and their own in amazing and significant ways.



## Katie Bowen - Staunton

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Katie enhanced Staunton's new bike trail and playground by building a pavilion where bike riders could rest and parents could sit to watch their children. The pavilion also added restrooms and a shaded picnic area to the bike trail. Katie collaborated with the city to meet building requirements, arranged and supervised construction and added extensive landscaping to the project. Local Girl Scout troops made stepping stones to contribute to the site. "It was a lot of hard work," Katie shared about her project, "but I'm happy I decided to do it." Katie is the daughter of Curtis and Reva Bowen. She is currently a sophomore at Staunton High School.

## Tracy Cantrell - Troy

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Tracy held a community-wide "Think Green Day!" event to address the issue of environmental preservation. Tracy first taught local Girl Scout troops about current environmental issues; these troops then designed informational posters that were used during her program. At the event, participants discussed current and potential environmental problems and their possible solutions. Guest speakers educated the audience about eco-friendly alternatives in everyday living. Each participant was issued a recycling guide and a reusable shopping bag to aid their greener lifestyle. From her project, Tracy gained a deeper understanding of a favorite quote from spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Tracy is the daughter of Lori and Gary Cantrell. She is currently a junior at Triad High School.



## Lauren Dorris - Glen Carbon

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Lauren organized seasonal programs for senior and disabled citizens living in her community. In these programs, Lauren coordinated a group of volunteers that provided unique and interactive games, crafts and other activities for members of St. John's Home and Community Care Center. For instance, at the "Christmas in July" program, participants exchanged presents and ate cookies. "The visits provided a fun afternoon that was enjoyed by all," Lauren said. She also provided additional theme and activity ideas for the care center to use as examples to continue the program. "I have learned that it is very important to finish what you started," she shared. "I decided to take Girl Scouts as far as I could and that has taught me a very important life lesson." Lauren is the daughter of Brette and Cindy Dorris. She is currently a senior at Edwardsville High School.

## **Katie Pejka - O'Fallon**

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Katie was inspired by her love of medicine to hold a community health fair and blood drive that would increase public health awareness. The health fair offered free blood pressure screenings and body fat analyses, as well as interactive stations concerning common cancers, immunizations, nutrition and exercise. Each station was equipped with take-home pamphlets so participants could share the educational experience with others. In addition, the blood drive collected 24 units of blood that were donated to the American Red Cross. Through her project, Katie learned that she “works well under pressure and that time determines the final product.” Katie is the daughter of Jon and Penny Pejka. She is currently a freshman at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville where she is majoring in Nursing.



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## **Alicia Notter - Columbia**

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Alicia started an “Adopt-a-Grandparent” project that connected elderly members of the Columbia Convalescent Center with teens from St. Paul United Church of Christ for cross-generation communication and companionship. Alicia conducted surveys to maximize compatibility between matches and organized activities that helped participants have fun and get to know each other. She felt that her project allowed nursing home residents to feel more connected to the community while sharing their knowledge and wisdom with the youth. Through her project, Alicia learned that “there is only one happiness in life – to love and be loved.” Alicia is the daughter of Gary and Debbie Notter. She is currently attending St. Louis Community College.



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## **Julianne Reynolds - O'Fallon**

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Julianne donated homemade fleece blankets for St. Louis Children’s Hospital. Julianne remembered that the kindness of strangers often cheered her sister who had been in and out of hospitals with leukemia when they were children and wanted to share that same compassion. To do so, Julianne coordinated community donations of fleece and then held a workshop in which volunteers assembled the blankets while learning more about the impact of childhood cancer. “I think out of all the things I learned, the most astounding and gratifying lesson was that people will always surprise you with their generosity,” said Julianne. “It was heartwarming to see the number of people who donated fleece, but even more so, the people who sacrificed their free time on a Saturday afternoon to cut and tie blankets.” Julianna is the daughter of Loriann and Dave Reynolds. She is currently attending O’Fallon Township High School.



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## **Lisa Straub - Columbia**

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Lisa held a Youth Cooking School for children living in a local women’s shelter. “I love to cook and I love children,” she explained. The children attending her classes were taught basic cooking skills, kitchen safety and nutrition through fun activities and hands-on food preparation. Through Lisa’s efforts, children not only gained valuable skills such as preparing healthy meals, but also raised self-esteem through learning and accomplishment. Lisa provided her lesson plans and recipes to the shelter so the program could be continued into the future. Through her project, Lisa learned that she is “capable of doing whatever she sets her mind to.” Lisa is the daughter of Paul Straub and Rachel Brandon-Straub. She is currently a freshman at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

