

Presentation to National Summit 11/14/18
Gold Award Successes
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As the Gold Award is an important part of our older girl work, I wanted to share some highlights of how Greater LA has elevated the Gold Award, resulting in hundreds of girls each year, every year for the past 10 years, earning their Gold. In fact, last year we celebrated 291 Gold Award Girl Scouts!

After we merged 10 years ago, we began an initiative with a **Volunteer Gold Award Committee** to ensure all areas of our council complied with a single process to help girls earn their Gold Award. “One Council, One Voice” was our new mantra - previously it was different for every one of the six legacy councils.

That initiative streamlined the process for volunteers to give their time in the capacity that suited them best, and made room for more volunteers to get involved. We now have 30 throughout the council who do one or a combination of several jobs, such as proposal and exit interviews, and serving as Gold Award mentors. This work is coupled with the responsibilities of three program specialists and one manager for our entrepreneurship pillar who (among their many responsibilities) coordinate the volunteers and the girls, and provide the essential “council connection” a girl needs to get through the process, including navigating Go Gold Online.

We require girls to attend a **face to face workshop**, offered over 45+ times a year across all our service centers. We offer two supporting programs: **Go for the Gold** and **Gold Award Bootcamp**. *Go for the Gold* is marketed mainly to girls who have completed their Silver Award (about 1200 girls/year throughout Greater LA) and all Seniors and Ambassadors who may need a little inspiration taking that first step towards Gold. A girl – led panel of Gold Award Girl Scouts and a Gold Committee Volunteer offer inspiration from their unique perspectives. *Gold Award Bootcamp* is marketed to girls who have attended Gold Award Workshops but have yet to get started on their project. We coach girls on the steps to earning their Gold Award and provide activities that develop girls’ research skills, learning to identify a root cause (a key challenge we have found in girls giving up on Gold), learning to develop a timeline and budget to meet the demands of their project, getting started on Go Gold Online, and knowing what resources are available.

As a council, we’ve committed to helping EVERY girl who wants to challenge herself, get to GOLD. We sign an annual job description with our volunteers to reinforce our shared accountability. We require and help girls learn how to be their own advocates- we do not take calls or emails from parents or troop leaders inquiring about projects or girls’ status in the process. We track data and follow up: if a girls went to a workshop bur she didn’t start her Gold Award proposal, we check in 3 months later. We provide a lot in the way of resources- workbook, Go Gold Online support for inputting and submission, scholarships girls can apply for by being a Gold Award Girl Scout, PR kits for girls to learn how to celebrate their achievement with their communities... and so on.

Most importantly, **GSGLA has developed a culture of achievement** which drives this, and other, processes. Brownies and Juniors in many service units are being groomed to think about going for Gold by watching and interacting with their older Girl Scout sisters. Service Units keep their Gold Award Girl Scouts engaged beyond their Gold Award year to help inspire other younger Girl Scouts. We also have Gold Award Girl Scout portraits at every Service Center to elevate their visibility and inspire younger girls. Our Emerging Leader Program encourages girls to stay in Girl Scouts and gives them options. We provide special opportunities such as mentoring and attending exclusive conferences we're invited to. And we will be developing an exciting, expanded Emerging Leader program for girls grade levels 6-12 over this next year. I can't wait to share more about this after we've launched! Finally, our council- wide celebration is a very well planned, joyful day for all our Gold Award Girl Scouts and their families.

Our success has to do with the **investment we make in older girls**, building up the right kind of volunteers and staff support around the Gold Award process. It takes a special kind of volunteer, and a special kind of staff specialist, who can work effectively within our guidelines to help girls achieve at this level. And it take ALL of us prioritizing this commitment. Our Gold Award celebration is by far the best day of our Girl Scout year and I couldn't be more proud to see our staff, our volunteers, our board and our families come together to support the girls. Our older girls and our Gold Award Girl Scouts shine so bright. They are our North Stars. They will be our torchbearers and our rallying touchpoint across the Movement. Let's remember that.