

2017 Gold Award Projects – A Sampling

This year, 256 girls earned their Girl Scout Gold Award in Greater Los Angeles.

Here are just some of their projects:

KENNEDY BECK, Saugus

Summary: “My project idea began after my late best friend was struck by a car while crossing the street. I knew immediately I wanted to do something to raise awareness about distracted driving. I held a booth at a 5K, talked to my school, and passed out bracelets to spread awareness and ultimately save lives.”

Outcome: “My Gold Award was extremely helpful in my grieving process. It also helped me learn how to put all of my energy towards something I was passionate about, and make a change in my community. I learned that a single person can change anything they want if they are truly ardent about the cause.”

EMILY BLAISDELL, La Cañada

Summary: “My project helped benefit animals at the Los Angeles Zoo. I held workshops with younger Girl Scouts to create piñatas that mimic natural food sources for the animals that zookeepers will fill with food. This gives the animals a more instinctive way of eating and prevents them from developing health issues.”

Outcome: “The greatest lesson I learned was how to schedule events with large groups. I learned how to work with troop leaders to find a date, time, and place to hold my workshops so that everyone could attend.”

JULIA BRAVO, Cerritos

Summary: “I started a program called Lunch Buddies on my campus, designed to create friendships between students with special needs and those from the general population. I hope my work promotes diversity and inclusivity.”

Outcome: “Through this experience I gained a drive to make a difference on my campus and in my community. I personally realized my passion to support people with special needs, and I now want to be a special education teacher. After working with other special education teachers, I learned professionalism, leadership, and confidence in my skills.”

RACHEL CHUNG, Torrance

Summary: “It is crucial that everyone votes to shape the future of America. I surveyed 120 people, and then created brochures which contained my results, voter statistics, and trends, and established registration drives and workshops.”

Outcome: “I’ve learned to not be afraid to speak my mind and that hard work does pay off in the end. This was a great passion project of mine, and the more confidence you project, the more people would be willing to listen.”

CAMERON COMBS, Woodland Hills

Summary: “I educated people about Prop 67, the ban on plastic bags, as well as built an interactive exhibit at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium. I also organized a beach clean-up with more than 200 Girl Scouts and families and donated 300 reusable bags to the aquarium.”

Outcome: “I have grown so much since beginning my Gold Award, learning countless leadership skills. My project has allowed me to grow into the sociable person I am today. I had to learn how to plan, organize, and work with others.”

TALaura COTHAN, Glendora

Summary: “The Special Beauties Pageant was designed for kids with special needs and disabilities. I wanted to give contestants a pageant where they could show their amazing talents and smiles. The program gave each contestant a chance to shine.”

Outcome: “If I stay focused I can accomplish anything, and my love for people with special needs and disabilities can be motivating.”

REBECCA DALEY, South Pasadena

Summary: “I helped build Monarch Way Station and hosted an opening ceremony. I also gave tours and talks to my community to spread knowledge about monarchs.”

Outcome: “I have learned how to coordinate with many different people at the same time and learned how far in advance activities need to be planned for them to be successful.”

ELLIE FAUSETT, La Cañada

Summary: “I worked with occupational therapists to find new ways to teach kids dressing techniques. I made vests that targeted the different skills a child needs to get dressed and then helped educate parents and community members about the importance of sensory integration therapy.”

Outcome: “I really improved my ability to problem-solve. Since I designed the vests, I had no idea if my plans would work. When my plans did not work, I had to re-design what to do and sometimes it took me three or four tries. I just had to remember to keep trying and I knew that in the end my project would be a success.”

JESSICA FORD, Malibu

Summary: “I created the Young Engineers Club and taught children and young teens how to build computers, which we then donated to kids in need. I hope my club inspires young kids, especially girls, to pursue careers in STEM fields.”

Outcome: “I have learned how to become a kind and efficient leader. My experience also taught me how to face challenges head-on and come up with creative solutions.”

MIKAELA FRICHTEL, Torrance

Summary: “I wrote an introductory engineering curriculum using breadboard projects for middle school girls. By publishing the curriculum and speaking to other teenagers about continuing the project, I hope to inspire more girls to pursue STEM.”

Outcome: “The greatest lesson I learned was the benefit of networking and reaching out to others. By connecting with educators and professionals, I had opportunities, like speaking at a NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory event, which I never would have had without networking.”

BRIDGET GEHAN, Encino

Summary: “I partnered with Alzheimer’s Greater Los Angeles to develop educational programs, through video and social media, and to help teens understand the disease and empower them to help support their family in the journey.”

Outcome: “The Gold Award helped me understand the importance of finding a problem, working to find a solution, and not giving up until I reached my goal. The lesson was tough to learn, but will stay with me in my future and continually inspire me.”

LAUREN GOEDDE, Pasadena

Summary: “I developed a text-based communication system to allow parish members to contact each other and the parish staff in the event of an earthquake emergency. Working with Dr. Lucy Jones, I created a pamphlet to educate people about the importance of texting, instead of calling, to communicate following an earthquake.”

Outcome: “I learned how to organize from the ground up. I also discovered how to work within a bureaucracy and alongside people that are not my age, including scientists, religious leaders, and church groups.”

MARINA KISSNER, Torrance

Summary: “My project transformed the walking path in the canyon of my church into an educational experience, teaching people about major religions and native wildlife to address the global issues of religious intolerance and climate change. The path provides a brochure and QR code option, a kids’ game, and a video for those who can’t walk the path.”

Outcome: “I learned the importance of being flexible and revising project plans as needed. I also learned the importance of time management and the need to factor in extra time for unexpected issues that arise.”

BIANCA LEE, San Gabriel

Summary: “Inspired by my grandparents’ technology proficiency, I created ‘Generation Tech,’ a series of technology classes held at Atherton Baptist Homes. I taught a variety of technological skills to connect senior citizens with younger generations.”

Outcome: “The greatest lesson I learned is that getting to know people in my community matters. Some of my best memories from my project stem from conversations with senior citizens.”

MELISSA LOPEZ, Alhambra

Summary: “For my project, I taught first aid and CPR to teenagers in Haiti living in orphanages. I held bake sales, fundraisers, and collected donations to raise money for my project. The teenagers gained new skills that are valuable for everyday life.”

Outcome: “Traveling to Haiti taught me to appreciate and be thankful for the privileges I have living in the United States. My personal outcome was the friendships I made in Haiti: I bonded with the team of volunteers, who are amazing people—intelligent, spoke multiple languages, humble, and caring. They inspired me to be a better person.”

ISABELLA MANESTAR, San Pedro

Summary: “My project focused on nurdles, pre-production plastic pellets that get dumped into the ocean and affect marine animals. I held a ‘Nurdle Day’ where people from my community learned about and collected nurdles.”

Outcome: “The greatest lesson I learned is how to be a better leader and to be more independent.”

KAELYN MCCLOUD, Palos Verdes Estates

Summary: “My project involved teaching the fundamentals of scientific research to children in the underserved community of Lynwood. Throughout the project, the students participated in fun and educational labs, listened to lectures, and participated in a science fair at the end.”

Outcome: “The greatest lesson would be to not take things for granted. Working with the underserved children in Lynwood showed me how there is so much to be grateful for. I was truly humbled.”

LAUREN NODA, Arcadia

Summary: “For my project, I walked the City of Sierra Madre and educated residents about the importance of having visible address numbers. I also offered my service to buy and install the address numbers for them. I hope my work will help emergency services and the community.”

Outcome: “I gained a lot of experience communicating with adults and businesses throughout my project. I also learned that not everyone is going to accept my help, but to not let that get to me because it is just a small portion of the big community that I am helping.”

DAGNY STAHL, Santa Monica

Summary: “I love hiking with my dogs, and I’ve also heard many stories of dogs getting hurt on hikes. Girl Scouts teaches us to be safe and prepared outdoors, including having a first-aid kit. Most people bring water and a snack on a hike, but overlook a small first aid kit-something that can make a huge difference: for your dog and for you.”

Outcome: “I learned to present myself professionally to busy adult experts to request their help and time, and how to politely but persistently follow up with them for progress and deliverables. I also gained confidence in public speaking, and how to give an engaging presentation to both kids and adults.”

MACKENZIE STARR, Los Angeles

Summary: “I created the first Young Women’s Conference at my high school to empower young girls to be confident in themselves. I led a group of 30 peers in planning this event, found catering/decoration companies, organized logistics, and contacted inspirational women to speak. I’ve also established a club at my school to continue this legacy.”

Outcome: “My Gold Award has truly taught me how to be an engaging leader. I needed to be confident enough in my vision to lead and motivate a group of my peers to complete this ambitious project. I gained skills in public speaking, negotiating with companies, as well as communicating with officials and convincing them to take part in this project.”

MCKENNA STEVENS, Los Angeles

Summary: “I held a three-day seminar to empower and provide self-assurance in our youth. I hope my project helps reinforce self-confidence and acceptance, even when the media is representing one type of woman.”

Outcome: “I learned how much the media can impact the way young women think and feel about themselves on a much larger scale, due to the connections I made with the girls who took my class. I didn’t realize how much the media negatively affects young girls today.”

ASHLEY VIGIL, Torrance

Summary: “I created an educational video game to teach children about the struggles animals go through in factories, constructed a presentation, and set up a booth. I hope my work will teach children about animal cruelty in factories and inspire them to look for alternative sources for food.”

Outcome: “I have learned that I can accomplish anything if I set my mind to it. Seeing others appreciate my work made me realize I should have more faith in myself, and risk displaying my art.”

YUE “CHERRY” YING, Santa Monica

Summary: “My project was inspired by my firsthand experience of living in both China and the U.S. and my passion for helping the health situation in China. I brought hand sanitizer to community hospitals in China, created brochures, and taught kids in summer schools. My project helped jump-start a government-sponsored program to distribute hand sanitizer.”

Outcome: “Although I have always noticed problems around the world, sometimes I was afraid that I couldn’t do much to change them. But now, I’ll always try my best to benefit society and be the most passionate member of the community I can be.”