

Katelyn Nelson's Gold Award Project: Citronelle History Society

Katelyn has been a Girl Scout most of her life. She has earned her Bronze and Silver Award. She was also a camp counselor during the summer. She currently attends Troy University, and plans to become an attorney after attending law school. She aspires to hold a position in congress.



How did you come up with your idea? History is something I have always been passionate about and I have a great love for learning about the past. While at the Surrender Under the Oak festival- a historic festival in Citronelle- I noticed a lack of enthusiasm for and knowledge of the history of Citronelle. It became aware to me that the history of my beloved town would be lost within the following years unless someone stepped up and took initiative to save it.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? I had some preparation for my project through the organizations I was a part of in high school. I know how to plan events, organize groups, and create documents; these skills transferred to my project.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you? Something funny, or touching, or that went terribly wrong and how you fixed it? Taking the CHSHS organization on a historic visit with the Citronelle Historical Preservation Society's historian was special to me not only because of the impact it had on the group. It was truly special when we played a historic game called Graces that was played by women in hoop skirts inside homes. This game was meant to make women more graceful, yet we were sprinting very ungracefully to score points.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? I scheduled times to work on my Gold Award and set goals for what I wanted to complete by the end of the week.

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? There were times when I thought that my Gold Award wouldn't be worth the effort put in. I felt that I should just end the process. However, it would always come back to me that without my Gold Award there was an extremely high possibility of Citronelle becoming a town without a past and this is unacceptable to me. I remembered the times of wanting to get my Gold Award so desperately. Whenever I felt discouraged the junior inside me would resurface to remind me of how important the impact of the gold award truly is.

How will people benefit from this? The citizens of Citronelle will not be at threat of losing their town history and will become more educated on the community's history through the youth. The students of CHS will be granted leadership opportunities in ways they haven't had before. They will be able to get involved in an organization that they might seem for suited to them.

How did you feel after you finished? I felt fantastic! It was so wonderful to have achieved such an honor!

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award (beyond telling them to just "go for it")? Start as early as you can. Don't wait till you think you will be ready. Take a leap of faith and start as early as you can. I waited to start my Gold Award and I was working really hard to make sure I could get things done. Start ASAP!

Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you? If so, how? It did! I learned how to better research, work with people, and head groups. I will take away better people skills and a more productive nature!

