

Olivia Stanwick's Gold Project: Puppet Centers for Special Education Classrooms



Olivia's Gold Award project focused on one of her passions- helping people with special needs. After creating puppet centers for special education classrooms in the Auburn City School System, she held a puppet workshop at Auburn High School for the self-contained classroom, and for the

Future Teachers of America student organization. Stanwick came up with the idea for her project when she was giving a presentation about self-contained classrooms at the National Conference Educators Rising in Phoenix, AZ.

How did you come up with your idea? For my Girl Scout Silver Award, I made princess puppets to donate to Auburn Day Care along with other learning activities with my troop. This project sparked my interest in puppets. I explored teaching puppets further when I made a presentation at the National Conference Educators Rising in Phoenix, AZ. I wanted to expand the topic for self-contained classrooms.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? No, because I believe in myself! I survived even learned how to hand sew puppets with the blanket stitch!

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? I kept up the momentum for the project by knowing that what I was working on was going to help and make a difference to the special needs students.

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? My goal is to make a difference in the lives of people with special needs. I did not get discouraged working on my project because I knew that what I was doing would be useful in special needs classrooms throughout the Auburn City School System.

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? When I was performing a puppet show for the Tiger Pals club, an organization that pairs special needs students with general education students, one of the students got so excited, he ran up to the theatre and wanted to touch the puppets. Seeing his excitement made me realize that I was making a difference

How will people benefit from this? The teachers will benefit from my Girl Scout Gold Award by having new teaching resources for their classrooms. The special needs students will benefit from my Girl Scout Gold Award by having a new approach to learning.

How did you feel after you finished? I was relieved and proud. I felt so much excitement! Knowing that I had accomplished my goal of earning my Girl Scout Gold Award is indescribable.

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award? Don't let the world push you down. If it does, then just stand back up and get moving forward. People will try to make you feel bad about yourself and say you won't finish your project. If it's your passion, then go for it.

Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you? If so, how? Did you learn new skills, or change your outlook on an issue? What will you take away from this experience? I had never sewn by hand before. It changed me by teaching me to appreciate the women around the world who have to sew their own clothes by hand. As a future special needs teacher, it makes me realize there are many ways to teach children.

Please give us a brief outline of your Girl Scout history and your future plans. I have completed my Bronze, Silver, and, now, Gold award. I plan to become a special needs teacher and this project is one way of reaching my future goals. As soon as possible, I will be completing a similar learning center for the Exceptional Foundation of East Alabama.