

Samantha Ammeter's Gold Project: Garden Square Summer Camp

Ammeter was inspired for her Gold Award Project after talking with a friend about summer plans. It was at that moment that she realized the Garden Square Community could benefit from a summer camp for kids. For her project, she created a camp for children who wanted to participate in fun summer activities but had no means of paying for it or transportation to and from. The camp included educational, religious, outdoor recreation, and arts and crafts exponents.



How did you come up with your idea? One of my friends from church lives in the Garden Square community. After a conversation about fun summer plans, I discovered that she was upset because she would be spending her summer babysitting for her seven younger siblings. I created this camp for children like her who wanted summer fun but had no means of paying for it or transportation to the events.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? At first, I was initially intimidated by the neighborhood I would be working in and how I was going to communicate with the community members operating on no trust or prior knowledge of the area.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? I kept up my momentum by creating bonds with the kids I was working with every day. Seeing their faces light up doing a simple arts and craft project made all of my hours of planning and frustration with more difficult children worth it.

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? I might have been discouraged on some days when I could not seem to grab the attention of the children, but I overcame that by directing the lesson to something more fun and hands on, such as coloring or dancing.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you? One day in my project that was particularly special to me was Percussion day. Music week was by far the kids favorite, but you could tell that they were more excited to drum on the drum set than hold a flute. Zantavious, a four-year-old camper, wanted me to show him how to play the bongos. I sat him in my lap and placed the bongos on his lap and he just started slamming on them. His big grin and adorable laugh was so touching. I do not think I have ever seen a smile so big on someone so little.

How will people benefit from this? The children of Garden Square benefit from this summer camp because they now have a safe and fun place to play over the summer. The parents of the children can benefit because they will have peace of mind that their children are in a safe place playing and learning rather than playing in the street or watching TV all summer long.

How did you feel after you finished? After I had finished my project, I felt a mixture of shock and sadness. I was shocked because I could not believe that the four weeks had gone by so quickly, and sadness because I would miss the kids I bonded with and the friends I made.

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award? My advice is to find a project you are truly passionate about. Just doing a project to get it over with and put on a resume will not leave as much of an impact on you as something you are passionate about will.

What will you take away from this experience? My Gold Project has definitely changed me for the better. It has made me more aware of struggles my community faces and how people live with them daily. It has given me a respect for large non-traditional families and how they manage in Montgomery. I learned how to truly practice patience with all challenges and how to manage a team of volunteers for a common good. I will take away my love of Garden Square and its children and the satisfying feeling of knowing I have made an impact on their lives.

Please give us a brief outline of your Girl Scout history and your future plans. I started in Girl Scouts during my first-grade year. I came home to my mom so excited to go pick out my vest and earn badges. After one year of scouting by my side, my mom became my troop leader and has been for nine years now. I fell in love with Girl Scouts because it has brought me friends, taken me camping, canoeing, made me more open-minded, and many more skills that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

I plan to attend Huntingdon College and double major in Music and Biology, with hopes to one day become a Pediatrician.