

The Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting. A national award, with national standards, it represents a girl's time, leadership, creativity and effort contributed to making their community better. The Gold Award project solves community issues and creates assets for the community in the future. It is more than a mere service project, as it challenges a girl to go beyond her prior experiences (and sometimes her comfort level) to take a leadership role in her community.

The Program team and the Young Women's Advisory Committees in Mobile and Montgomery are committed to maintaining standards of excellence for our Gold Award recipients. Therefore, all applicants will submit proposals to the committee and be screened in an interview before starting the project. Applicants will appear before the committee again when their final report is ready; girls will be required to make a presentation about their project and put their best foot forward.

Leaders can help girls achieve their goals by requiring that their advisees do all of their requirements and present their ideas in the correct format.

Please remember that the Gold Award advisor cannot be a girl's parent. The troop leader can be the advisor for steps 1-3; by step 4 the girl should have identified another project advisor and should have this person's written agreement to help her.

In order for a project to be worthy of the Gold standard, it must meet these three qualifications:

1. **Leadership-Advocacy:** The purpose of the Gold Award is that the Girl Scout become an advocate for a cause and lead others to help her. The Gold Award was never designed to be a "one woman" show. She might do this by recruiting, training, and coordinating volunteers to help with her project. Or she might do this by making speeches in front of civic organizations educating them and persuading them to help with her cause.
2. **Education-Awareness:** The Gold Award project should educate or make the community aware of a need and the ways the public can help. The Girl Scout can do this in a variety of ways: create and print brochures to distribute; give presentations to clubs or civic organizations; man an educational booth at a community fair; create public service announcements and have them played on a radio station.
3. **Sustainability:** The project should be one that can be continued or kept up after the Girl Scout graduates from high school. This can be done in a variety of ways: recruit volunteers or a club to take on the project; produce a handbook to give to others (maybe other Girl Scout troops) explaining how the project was done; create a patch program for Girl Scouts that includes the service aspects of this project.

Here are some examples of good Gold Award projects in our council:

A Girl Scout organized a "Creative Expressions Art Day" for special needs children. Her goal was to educate the public as to what children with special needs are capable of. She targeted schools that work with those children and invited them. She secured a location, designed the activities, recruited, trained, and scheduled volunteers, provided lunch and materials.

Another Girl Scout designed a "Sports Fun Day". Her goal was to educate the public as to how to fight childhood obesity through exercise. She recruited participants, located athletes to donate their time and teach skills, secured a location and planned all activities.

A Girl Scout in Mobile is currently finishing her Gold Award, which is a literacy project. She coordinated a summer reading program in Bayou La Batre. Each week the children read a book and the Girl Scout created activities and found crafts the children could do to reinforce the theme. She recruited, trained, and scheduled volunteers, implemented activities and crafts, and coordinated the sessions weekly. To make this project sustainable, she is writing a handbook that can be distributed to libraries and other groups interested in doing a similar project.

Many current proposals involve collecting items or making items for an agency or group. While those are certainly worthwhile endeavors, they are not Gold Award projects. However, they can become Gold Award projects with a little creativity and a change in the focus of the project. For example, if a girl wants to make or collect items to give to the elderly, she needs to also start a campaign to make the public aware of the needs and challenges of the elderly.

If leaders need any advice on helping girls develop their proposal, that's what we are here for! Please contact me and I will be glad to help.

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