

Clair Harden's Gold Project: AIM Storybook Program

For Claire's project, she worked with the Aid to Inmate Mothers (AIM) Storybook program, which allows incarcerated moms to read a story to their children on a recording. The program works to give children storybooks and recordings of their mother reading the books to them. AIM volunteers also bring children from all over the State of Alabama to see their moms every couple of weekends. Claire's project assisted with both of these programs. Claire organized a storybook collection, built shelves at AIM to store books, and developed a craft curriculum to provide a fun activity for the moms and children to do together.



How did you come up with your idea? I spend a lot of time in the Lake Jordan area with my family. When we would drive past Julia Tutwiler Prison on Saturdays, I would see families waiting to visit their loved ones in the prison. Seeing that made me feel compassion and gave me a desire to help the children.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? The initial part, the Storybook collection and shelf building, occurred in the summer and was easy to accomplish.

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? I was never discouraged, although sometimes the craft kit assembly was a little tedious, as it involved cutting, or punching out stickers, counting out pipe cleaners, etc. for 20 kits for each month.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you? AIM has a newsletter that it publishes on line and on Facebook. Seeing the pictures of kids at the prison or at the women's facility making crafts with their moms that I had designed, especially when they had big smiles on their faces, made me very happy.

How will people benefit from this? I hope that my project will help the kids of moms who are incarcerated to feel closer to their moms, which will help the kids get through the separation, and will help the moms once they are able to join the family again.

How did you feel after you finished? I was relieved to have finished and very happy that AIM was pleased with the shelves and craft kits.

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award? I would advise them to stick with it and to get as much done as they can during summer break.

What will you take away from this experience? I learned that even if you're a student, and don't have the power to make big changes, you can still impact other people in a positive and meaningful way.

Please give us a brief outline of your Girl Scout history and your future plans. I have been a Girl Scout since I was in kindergarten. I have earned my Bronze, and Silver, as well as Junior Aide, Program Aide, Service to Girl Scouting-- Cadette, and Service to Girl Scouting-- Senior. I have also served as a Girl Scout Media G.I.R.L. and a counselor at Camp Sunshine for two years. At this time, I plan to go to college and be a science major with a pre-med focus.