

## Elizabeth Turochy's Gold Project: Seatbelt Awareness



Elizabeth has been a Girl Scout since 2005. In 2009, she completed her Bronze Award, a back-to-school clothes drive for her community. Then in 2011, she founded Camp Star for her Silver Award. Camp Star is a social justice project that specializes in high quality youth programming for traditionally underserved communities. She is currently attending Auburn University, and leading a Brownie Troop.

***How did you come up with your idea?*** Many people in my community either had misconceptions or were simply unaware of the benefits of wearing a seat belt. I have friends who have lost loved ones in car crashes, none of which were wearing seat belt. If there was any solution to this problem, I knew I wanted to be part of it.

***Were you intimidated by the scale of the project?*** At some points, yes. After my Gold Award project was approved, I thought “How am I ever going to complete this?” It took some time and a few changes to the original plan, but I got it done.

***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?*** A couple of days after my Gold Award was approved I went to pick up a few of the teenagers in Camp Hill that participated in the video and I informed them that I had finished my project. They asked questions like “what the interview was like”, how the council liked the video, etc. then proceeded to tell me new stories of what it was like going to school the next week after the video. They said many of their friends said they saw it on the news and asked if it was really them, or what the camera crew was like, or if there were any future videos that they could participate in.

***How did you keep up the momentum for the project?*** Having a passion for equity and equality, which is a main focus in my project, continuously gave me momentum to continue the project.

***Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that?***

Receiving constant positive feedback from friends, participants, family, ALDOT, and State Farm encouraged me to continue, even during slower periods of the project.

***How will people benefit from this?*** Many people in my community were uninformed or simply unaware of the benefits of wearing a seat belt. After the seat belt safety PSA was published, many people came up to me afterwards saying that they couldn't even put the car in drive without hearing the video in their heads and putting their seat belt on. In the future, I believe this project will promote seat belt safety and save lives.

***How did you feel after you finished?*** I felt as if I've made a positive impact in my community, as well as my state, while promoting transportation equity and equality for traditionally underserved communities.

***What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award (beyond telling them to just "go for it")?*** Once you identify an issue in your community, make sure you have a passion in that area. Your project will take a while to complete and having a passion in some portion of your project will help to continuously motivate you even when you are discouraged. Don't be afraid of change. Many times during my project I came across steps in my project plan that were no longer applicable as my project evolved. I was able to edit it along the way and make my project even better.

***Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you? If so, how?*** My Gold Award Project helped me to become closer to my community, in my community. A lot of my work is done with people that live in Camp Hill, but we were largely working outside of the town. This Project allowed me to be in the town itself. Working in Camp Hill helped me form closer relationships with officials and citizens, along with expanding my knowledge on the severity of the conditions of Camp Hill. Moving forward, I plan on working in the town more often and improving its resources.