



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Jaime Alvarez
Senior Director of Marketing & Communications
Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Inc.
315.275.2251 office direct
315.263.5957 cell
jalvarez@gsnypenn.org

Vestal Girl Scouts Build Gaga Ball Pit as Part of Silver Award Project

Grand opening is July 20 at 6 p.m. at the GSNYPENN office in Maine, N.Y.

Maine, N.Y. (July 14, 2022) — Middle school students Sophia Juriga and Francesca (Frannie) Vallone of Girl Scout Troop 30524 in Vestal, N.Y., part of the [Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways Council](#), are building and dedicating a gaga ball pit at the GSNYPENN Service Center located in Maine. They will host a grand opening on Wednesday, July 20, at 6 p.m. at the office located at 2626 State Route 26 and are inviting the community to attend.



Gaga ball is a fast-paced game like dodgeball but played in an octagonal pit with a soft foam ball. All players need to dodge, strike, run and jump while attempting to hit opponents below the knees with the ball. Sophia and Frannie developed the project as part of their Girl Scout Silver Award. The Silver Award is the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6-8) can earn. Girls who pursue this award look around their neighborhoods and/or schools and develop a project to make their community better in the process.

Caption: Vestal Girl Scouts (L-R) Francesca (Frannie) Vallone and Sophia Juriga stand inside their finished gaga ball pit at the Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways' office located in Maine, N.Y. The project was completed as part of their Girl Scout Silver Award.

Their end goal according to Frannie is, “to provide a space for local children, teens, and our fellow Girl Scouts with more opportunities to be active to improve their physical and mental well-being while participating in an all-inclusive game.” They started working on their Silver Award as a full troop in September 2021 and then the pair focused their efforts on the gaga ball pit in November.

“We realized that almost every park in our hometown does not have a gaga ball pit and that overall exercise for some kids is lacking. We also wanted to inspire girls who come to the GSNYPENN council office in Maine that exercise outside is very fun, especially playing a game you don’t hear of every day,” says Sophia.

Silver Award projects require 50 hours of work per Girl Scout. Sophia and Frannie have raised approximately \$1,000 in funds for their project through a bottle drive and car wash they organized as well as donations. The pair recently completed 8th grade at Vestal Middle School. Sophia has been a Girl Scout since Daisy level (grades K-1) and Frannie since Brownie (grades 2-3). They completed their work with support from their Project Guides Sandra Juriga and Jenn Vallone.

To learn more about this Girl Scout Silver Award project or for questions about the grand opening of the gaga ball pit, please email Sandra Juriga at omaginata@gmail.com or Jenn Vallone at jennvallone@gmail.com.

GSNYPENN serves girls in K-12 across 26 counties: Allegany, Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates in New York and Bradford and Tioga in Pennsylvania.

Annual membership is \$25; financial assistance is available. To start her adventure, visit gsnypenn.org/join. To become a volunteer, learn more at gsnypenn.org/volunteer. To help make Girl Scouting possible for girls in your community, visit gsnypenn.org/donate.

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About Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Inc.

Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls in grades K-12. Our extraordinary journey began in 1912 when our Movement was founded by Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low. Today, we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the

world a better place. We offer every girl the chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure and success. GSNYPENN is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA to administer the Girl Scout program in 24 counties of New York and two in Pennsylvania. Learn more at gsnypenn.org.