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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18 Local Girl Scouts Earn Prestigious Gold Award, Girl Scouting's Highest Achievement

Cicero, N.Y. (February 4, 2020) — [Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways](https://www.gsnypenn.org) (GSNYPENN) is proud to announce that 18 girls from across its council territory have earned the prestigious Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting. Since 1916, the Girl Scout Gold Award has stood for excellence and leadership. Over the course of the last century, millions of Girl Scouts have positively impacted their communities and the world with creative, impactful and sustainable Take Action projects.

The Gold Award recognizes Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors (grades 9-12) who demonstrate extraordinary leadership through sustainable and measurable projects. The Gold Award is the culmination of a girl's demonstration of self-discipline, leadership ability, time management, creativity, initiative and a significant mastery of skills. Gold Award Girl Scouts are the dreamers and doers who take "make the world a better place" to the next level.

Each girl must dedicate a minimum of 80 hours to planning and implementing her project, which must benefit the community and have lasting impact. The Gold Award acknowledges the power behind each Girl Scout's dedication to not only empowering and bettering herself, but also to making the world a better place for others. Seniors and Ambassadors who earn the award tackle issues that are dear to them and drive lasting change in their communities and beyond. The Gold Award is a key that can open doors to scholarships, preferred admission tracks for college and amazing career opportunities.

"The Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable and proof that girls can not only make a difference, but already have. These young women are bright, courageous leaders and change makers. We congratulate them on earning Girl Scouting's highest award and look forward to the mark they'll each continue to make in their communities and on the wider world in the future," says GSNYPENN CEO Julie Dale.

The council honored its Gold Award Girl Scouts at a recognition event at Drumlins in Syracuse with keynote speaker and entrepreneur Donna Curtin. Curtin is a Girl Scout alum and owner of Grace Auto Body & Paint in North Syracuse. In addition, three Gold Award Girl Scouts were selected for special council scholarships to be used toward advancing their education at an institution of higher ed. The girls were chosen by the award committee because their projects demonstrated highest levels of leadership, sustainability, measurability and national/global links. Thanks to generous donors, the council presented a total of \$12,000 in memory of three special Girl Scout sisters lost in 2019 who helped build girls of courage, confidence and character and who each made the world a better place.

- The Marie Hepworth Scholarship (\$5,000) was presented to Veronica Ricketson of Nichols for her project, Nichols Hometown Heroes. Ms. Hepworth dedicated her life to supporting girl development through her 20-plus years serving as executive director of GSNYPENN legacy council Indian Hills and various volunteer activities in her community of Johnson City.
- The Kelly Perkins Scholarship (\$4,000) was presented to Emily Dowd of Syracuse for her project, We Rise Above The Streets Remodel. Ms. Perkins, a lifelong Girl Scout and GSNYPENN summer camp staff member, impacted the lives of campers and younger Girl Scouts in her community of Newark Valley.
- The Kerrie Black Scholarship (\$3,000) was presented to Amethyst Gardner of Oneonta for her project, United Methodist Clergy Marker Program. Ms. Black, a lifelong Girl Scout, was a GSNYPENN Regional Support Manager for Broome and Delaware counties who served her volunteers with excellence and was always willing to lend a hand to her fellow colleagues.

GSNYPENN Gold Award Girl Scouts

Emily Dowd of Syracuse, N.Y. (Onondaga County)

Take Action Project: We Rise Above The Streets Remodel

Emily addressed the lack of clothing, personal hygiene items and professional attire worn on job interviews for the homeless. Working with We Rise Above the Streets, she created a community closet where people can go to find these items. She also created a job interview room filled with professional clothing, shoes and binders with tips for a successful job search. Emily currently attends Onondaga Community College.

Amethyst Gardner of Oneonta, N.Y. (Otsego County)

Take Action Project: United Methodist Clergy Marker Program

Amethyst created permanent grave markers to celebrate the lives of deceased United Methodist Ministers buried in Oneonta cemeteries. She also researched and created a historical book of their ministry service and burial locations. Amethyst is a graduate of Oneonta High School and currently attends SUNY Oneonta where she is studying early childhood and elementary education.

MaryRose Giangioffe of Cazenovia, N.Y. (Madison County)

Take Action Project: The Sharing Schrank

MaryRose created her project to benefit students at her local high school who were in need of new clothing. She wanted those who are less fortunate to have access to appropriate items for everything from physical education class to formal attire for the Senior Ball. MaryRose is a graduate of Cazenovia High School and currently attends SUNY Oneonta where she is studying elementary education.

Kaylei Gleason of Auburn, N.Y. (Cayuga County)

Take Action Project: Teacher Relief

Kaylei wanted to provide necessary classroom supplies to an underfunded elementary school in her community, so the staff wouldn't have to spend their own money. She implemented her project by reaching out to local businesses for help and educated the community through a newspaper article and social media. Her efforts allowed teachers and students to focus on learning, rather than worry where or if they could get necessary resources. Her hope for the future is that the project will expand to cover more schools. Kaylei is a graduate of Auburn High School.

Julia Hamilton of Fayetteville, N.Y. (Onondaga County)

Take Action Project: Blood Drives Save Lives

Julia addressed the constant need for blood donation. She started new blood drive rotations at St. Matthew's Church in East Syracuse and Fayetteville United Methodist Church in Fayetteville. The 16 blood drives she organized saved up to 1,065 lives through the amount of blood donated. In addition, she educated children and adolescents about the need for blood donation. Julia wrote, designed and published a brochure for older teens regarding blood donation that several medical providers in the Syracuse area have agreed to disperse at their offices. She is currently studying alcohol and substance abuse counseling at Onondaga Community College and hopes to eventually become a nurse practitioner.

Emily Jenner of Chittenango, N.Y. (Madison County)

Take Action Project: Community Garden & Message Sign Reconstruction at First Baptist Church of Chittenango

Emily addressed the concern of God and country with her local church and community through a remembrance garden celebrating both. The garden is adorned with flagpoles for American and Christian flags. The project is dedicated to the men and women of the armed forces, and the citizens in her community. Emily is currently a junior at Chittenango High School and interested in pursuing a degree in forensic science.

Carolyn Jessop of Fayette, N.Y. (Seneca County)

Take Action Project: Camp Whitman Trail Sign

Carolyn wanted to ensure campers at Camp Whitman would be able to identify wildlife who make their home at the property. She decided to start by making signs to help identify birds that are native to New York State. Signs will be rotated every three years by Camp Whitman staff. Carolyn's team also built a large kiosk to keep the signs covered and protected from the weather. From her experience, Carolyn says she learned the importance of communication, making a schedule and the skills needed to lead a team.

Shannon Kirkpatrick of North Syracuse, N.Y. (Onondaga County)

Take Action Project: Mural Project 2018

Shannon created a vibrant 58-foot-long mural in the center of her hometown of North Syracuse. The mural increases art and historical awareness and also the aesthetic in her town. Shannon graduated with high honors from Cicero-North Syracuse High School and now studies television, radio & film at Syracuse University.

Madison Krouse of Manlius, N.Y. (Onondaga County)

Take Action Project: Project Diaper Bank

Madison helped build awareness of the need for clean diapers for babies in Central New York by designing an activity book for elementary school-aged children and producing a PowerPoint video for middle school health classes. She currently attends Fayetteville-Manlius High School and plans to enroll in college to pursue a career in teaching.

Gianna Leone of Victor, N.Y. (Ontario County)

Take Action Project: Summer Book Share

Gianna helped address the issue of the lack of summer reading by collaborating with her local library to hold a weekly family story hour with a different theme each week. She also collected new and gently used books so that local students in 4th-6th grades could “shop” for books to take home to read over the summer. Gianna is currently a junior at Victor Senior High School.

Rachel McFadden of Clifton Springs, N.Y. (Ontario County)

Take Action Project: Midlakes Gay Straight Alliance

Rachel supported LGBTQ peers at her school by creating a Gay Straight Alliance club. The club also promoted training for students and staff to become advocates. Rachel is a graduate of Midlakes High School and currently attends SUNY Oswego where she is studying communications.

Yesha Patel of Brewerton, N.Y. (Onondaga County)

Take Action Project: Art for All

Yesha addressed limitations of play for children at Upstate Pediatric Pulmonary and Cystic Fibrosis Center. Patients have limited access to toys and educational learning materials due to infectious disease control—the chance of spreading certain germs, further compromising their health. She wanted children under the center’s care to have a fun, clean learning environment that was equally educational for all to help better their overall experience and reduce anxiety. She developed hidden picture art murals for the center’s walls. Yesha is a graduate of Paul V. Moore High School.

Erin Perry of Johnson City, N.Y. (Broome County)

Take Action Project: Roll for It

Erin used her love of tabletop role-playing games to help at-risk students develop better social and problem-solving skills as they enter middle school. She developed materials and ran a seven-week program for 5th grade girls who worked together through an adventure she developed. The girls also used the skills they gained to assist Erin in running a community gaming event. Erin is a graduate of Johnson City High School and currently attends John Jay College of Criminal Justice where she is majoring in forensic science.

Alexis Randis of Binghamton, N.Y. (Broome County)

Take Action Project: Family Enrichment Network (FEN) Cooking Classes

Alexis saw a need for young people to learn basic cooking skills, as she recognized a lack of home cooked meals within her own peer group can lead to poor nutrition and eating habits. She wanted to make a difference and worked to help children and their families who use services provided by the Family Enrichment Network to learn how to cook healthy meals. She provided instruction on basic food safety and how to be safe in a kitchen and also provided families with a cookbook of the recipes they learned in class. Alexis is a graduate of Chenango Valley High School.

Veronica Ricketson of Nichols, N.Y. (Tioga County)

Take Action Project: Nichols Hometown Heroes

Veronica organized a program in her community that honors local veterans with hometown hero banners that are displayed throughout the Village of Nichols. Veterans living in the community, as well as families of deceased veterans, were very moved and grateful for her efforts. Veronica is currently a senior at Tioga Central High School.

Holly Sagrestano of New Hartford, N.Y. (Oneida County)

Take Action Project: Make Music Happen

Holly created a new musical instrument lending program available to all people in the MidYork Library System. Her effort ensures that people of all ages can be involved in the musical arts. Holly will graduate with honors from New Hartford Senior High School in June and plans to attend Northern Arizona University to study vocal music education.

Christy Sherman of Binghamton, N.Y. (Broome County)

Take Action Project: Activities for Respiratory Patients

Christy addressed the issue of the restrictions respiratory patients face when trying to get around at Bridgewater Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing in Binghamton. She helped improve their quality of life by bringing activities to those who are unable to leave the facility. Christy is a graduate of Binghamton High School and currently attends SUNY Oneonta where she is studying childhood education (grades 1-6).

Jillian Wright of Phelps, N.Y. (Ontario County)

Take Action Project: Paw Print Therapy

Jillian designed her project to bring the human-animal bond to individuals who may not have the means to experience it on a day-to-day basis. Through her project, individuals can bring their furry friends to a local assisted living facility in Phelps to interact with residents, bringing them joy and creating special connections each visit. Jillian is a graduate of Midlakes High School and is currently studying animal science at Cornell University.

Girl Scouts serves girls in grade K-12. Annual membership is \$25. Financial assistance is available. To register a girl online, visit gsnypenn.org/join. To become an adult volunteer, learn more at gsnypenn.org/volunteer.



Gold Award Girl Scouts from across the Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways Council attend a special recognition event at Drumlins in Syracuse, N.Y. They are pictured with GSNYPENN CEO Julie Dale (center, top row).

(Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways)

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Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Inc.

Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. We believe in the power of every G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ to change the world. Our extraordinary journey began more than 100 years ago with the original G.I.R.L., 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. 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. We offer every girl a chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure, and success. Learn more by visiting gsnypenn.org, calling 1.855.213.8555, emailing info@gsnypenn.org or following @GSNYPENN on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GSNYPENN), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/GSNYPENN), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/GSNYPENN) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/GSNYPENN).