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Gold Award
Girl Scout Lexi: Lake Michigan
Cleanup Makes a Global Impact

Summer 2022
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Having Fun, Making New Friends, Fostering Community



Daisies in Troop 11475 have fun doing activities with new friends.

Elisabeth, co-leader of Daisy troop 11475, has fond memories of being a Girl Scout as a child. So when her daughter, Elika, started kindergarten last fall, she registered Elika as a Girl Scout and volunteered to lead a new Daisy troop.

For Elisabeth and troop co-leaders Sara and Erica, it was important to help connect their incoming kindergartners with other girls in a large classroom size composed of mainly boys. Troop members came from five different classrooms at Stormonth Elementary in Milwaukee, and over the course of the year, they blossomed together: Quieter Daisies gained confidence speaking in front of others, the troop earned badges and hiked in the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, and they sold more than 1,550 boxes of Girl Scout cookies while participating in their first Cookie Program.

The troop also found inspiration from older Girl Scouts and role models in the community. While earning the Respecting Authority Badge, Elisabeth's sister—a paramedic—spoke to the troop about her job and gave the Daisies blood pressure readings. The Daisies also met with a Brownie troop at their school to learn about activities and community service opportunities they can plan for next year. For the Daisies, Girl Scouting provided a setting where new friendships could flourish in a supportive environment.

“Being a Daisy makes me more kind and more helpful,” said Violet, a Girl Scout Daisy. “I also really like the special people we meet at our meetings.”

When you support Girl Scouts, you're helping build a community where every Girl Scout belongs and is free to be their most authentic self.

Why I Give: To Build Girls (and Women) of Courage, Confidence, and Character

For Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast Board Member Veronica Gunn, courage has been an asset during her biggest career moves—and it's an attribute she developed early on as a Girl Scout selling cookies.

“I remember overcoming fears of having to approach people and ask them for help in our business,” Veronica says. “I have benefited from that in every aspect of my career path.”

Today, Veronica is the CEO of Genesis Health Consulting, a business that helps shape systems to improve child health and wellbeing. When she started the company in 2018, she drew upon the courage she developed early on as a Girl Scout Brownie: Her new venture was a major pivot from her previous work in healthcare administration.

“I credit a great deal of that willingness to take a risk and start a company to my experience as a Girl Scout,” she says.

For Veronica, supporting Girl Scouts is a way to help others build the courage, confidence, and character that they will carry into adulthood. Many of Veronica's mentors were also Girl Scouts at one point. “Their appreciation for helping support other women and their value in leadership is a consistency of the Girl Scouting experience,” Veronica says. This consistency is something Veronica looks forward to passing on to the next generation.

“I want to continue to make it possible for every Girl Scout to have an opportunity to maximize their learning and experience,” Veronica adds. “This is our future. Our future leadership, workforce, our entrepreneurs—they are our girls.”



Board member and supporter, Veronica, celebrating Girl Scouts who earned Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards at a recent Highest Awards Celebration.

Making a Difference Locally and Beyond



Girl Scout Lexi working on her Gold Award project and earning the Highest Award in Girl Scouting.

Gold Award Girl Scouts don't just change the world for the better—they change it for good. For her Gold Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can earn in Girl Scouting, Lexi cleaned up microplastics from the beaches of Lake Michigan and educated the community on the ways trash harms marine wildlife.

Lexi, a Girl Scout who started as a Daisy and who will be an incoming high school senior this fall, started her project by researching ways to protect the waters of the world. She discovered she could make a difference by focusing on bodies of water close to home.

Lexi recruited volunteers and led eight beach cleanups, collecting more than 50 pounds of microplastics. Microplastics aren't biodegradable, so when they get into the water, the effects on aquatic ecosystems can be disastrous. These local cleanups prevented trash from traveling further out into the oceans: The Great Lakes flow into the Atlantic Ocean, and rivers around Milwaukee flow into the Gulf of Mexico.

"I wanted to do a project that puts emphasis on the fact that Girl Scouts can make a difference in their own homes by the lakes, which leads to a larger impact," said Lexi.

Lexi also created a series of YouTube videos to guide Brownie troops through their World of Water Journey and walk the younger Girl Scouts through steps to earn their patches. Initially, Lexi planned to present to Brownie troops in-person. She needed to quickly adjust her plans when the pandemic limited in-person meetings.

"Girl Scouting really does help practice problem solving, and I bring this skill with me when I go to work and school," Lexi said.

This year, Lexi presented to Girl Scouts and families in-person at the Highest Awards Celebration to explain how her Gold Award project created global impact from a local starting point.

"Seeing the looks on people's faces when they were listening to what I was saying was most impactful to me; they were truly shocked by what I was saying," said Lexi.

Your support helps Girl Scouts like Lexi leave the world a better place, starting in their home communities and beyond.

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Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast is funded by United Way agencies, public support, and product sales.



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Dear Girl Scout Friends,

The summer season slips by quickly—too quickly! But the start of fall is an exciting time, ushering in new beginnings for Girl Scouts as troops reunite and new troops form across the council.

The story of Daisy troop 11475 (page 2) is a timely reminder of what Girl Scouts offers its youngest participants, with opportunities to make new friends, and meet older Girl Scouts and mentors in the community. Girl Scouts, as young as kindergarten, are already seeing a world of opportunity unfold before them.

Meanwhile, our older Girl Scouts can embark on their Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects to enhance their leadership skills and improve our community and the world—like Gold Award Girl Scout Lexi (page 3)—who led eight Lake Michigan beach cleanups that ultimately prevented trash from flowing into the oceans.

Support from donors like you helps Girl Scouts of all ages participate in programming that builds courage, confidence, and character—just ask GSWISE Board Member and supporter Veronica Gunn (page 2), who credits her own Girl Scouting experience with helping her develop courage, which has been a critical asset during career moves as an adult.

I sincerely appreciate your ongoing support of Girl Scouts in our community. Without you, we wouldn't be able to provide opportunities for Girl Scouts to explore, learn new skills, tap into their courage, and leave the world a better place. Thank you.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Christy L. Brown, JD, MA
GSWISE Chief Executive Officer



Christy L. Brown, CEO