

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast

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a community publication

Summer 2021

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**Girl Scout
Risk-taker
Isabel:
Because of
you, girls know
how to take
charge in an
emergency.**



Junior Troop Completes Journey Virtually

The pandemic may have limited girls' opportunities to meet in-person, but it didn't stop a GSWISE Junior troop from completing a Girl Scout Journey. They just found a way to do so virtually!

This troop of fourth and fifth graders from around the council, which has been meeting virtually since last fall, was inspired to embark on their first Journey as a step toward earning the Girl Scout Bronze Award. During six meetings over Zoom, the troop worked together on the Think Like an Engineer Journey, which challenges girls to solve problems with the design thinking process and execute a Take Action Project in the community.

Each girl completed engineering tasks like designing an emergency shelter for blizzards and creating earthquake-proof structures using items from around their homes, complete with careful testing. After working on projects independently, they came together to share their successes and best practices together on Zoom.

The Take Action Project required the girls to think outside the box and develop a community project they could work on together, even when they were not able to physically gather as a group. Every step of the process was girl-led, says troop leader Rose Grinder-Mondragon. The girls came up with more than 40 different ideas for their Take Action Project.



Through CampHERO, girls learn they have what it takes to be a First Responder.

This year, Marilyn generously donated to support the full cost of a girl attending CampHERO, a weeklong camp experience where girls in grades 9 through 12 train with real-world heroes and see that women have what it takes to be firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians. Through partnerships with Milwaukee Police-Fire-EMS and Milwaukee Area Technical College-Oak Creek Campus, girls have access to hands-on experiences that help them discover their abilities and interests and build the confidence needed to consider these traditionally male-dominated careers.

To donate to CampHERO or any of our GSWISE programs, please visit the **Give** section at gswise.org or contact us at 414-443-3909 or giving@gswise.org.



Girl Scouts worked on projects independently then came together to share their successes on Zoom.

"When we started narrowing them down, the girls were really compassionate toward each other," Rose says. "I came prepared to have to mediate that, and the girls did it all themselves."

Ultimately, the girls chose to create pet toys to donate to local animal shelters for their Take Action Project.

"Some places don't get enough money to get toys for animals," says Girl Scout Madeleine. "Through our Take Action Project, we made the world a better place by helping out animals."

The girls are continuing the momentum from their Journey now as they work on their Girl Scout Bronze Award project.

"I was really impressed listening to the girls self-run meetings and how compassionate they were toward each other," Rose says. "That's a skill I haven't always seen in adults, let alone in fourth and fifth grade girls."

With the successful completion of the Think Like an Engineer Journey, the girls are ready to progress toward their Bronze Award as they develop into tomorrow's leaders.

Why I Give: Encouraging Girls to Explore Careers as First Responders

Marilyn John has been a supporter of Girl Scouts for decades. As a former GSWISE board member, a lifetime member of Girl Scouts, and a donor since 1987, she has supported countless initiatives over the years—but CampHERO is one that's particularly near and dear to her heart.

Marilyn, a retired instructor of engineering and design with a degree in engineering, remembers growing up in a family that encouraged her to explore her talents and interests. As a young girl, her uncle shared his love of engineering with Marilyn, teaching her how to add and subtract before she started kindergarten. She had tremendous respect for her dad, a city of Chicago firefighter. The early influences of her father and uncle led Marilyn to follow her passion for math and engineering.

To this day, she remains committed to supporting programs like CampHERO which stoke girls' interests in traditionally male-dominated careers.

"In the past, there was too much pigeonholing; if you were a girl, you were discouraged from trying to get into engineering or pursuing jobs as mechanics or firefighters," she says. "I wanted to be able to give a young lady today the ability to see that the possibilities available to her are limitless."

Girl Scout Isabel today and as a Brownie in 2012.

LEADER



Girl Scout Isabel Receives National Lifesaving Medal of Honor

Iuring a weekend on an inland lake in Wisconsin in August 2020, Isabel, a Girl Scout Ambassador from Brookfield, was practicing her paddleboard skills near the shore. As she looked out onto the water, she noticed her younger sister and three other girls drifting dangerously far out.

The girls had floated away on a raft without realizing how strong the current was. Suddenly a huge gust of wind flipped the raft. All the girls fell from the raft into the water, most without life jackets. Some tried to swim after it while others signaled for help. Isabel sprang into action, grabbed a paddleboard, and paddled through the choppy water toward the girls, keeping a close eye on the number of heads bobbing in the water to be sure nobody went under.

Within minutes, Isabel arrived at the girls, offering them refuge on the paddleboard while waiting for a rescue boat. After the girls climbed aboard the boat, Isabel paddled back to shore. Her heroic actions ultimately earned her the Girl Scouts of the USA National Lifesaving Medal of Honor Award.

“There is no doubt in my mind that Isabel’s 11 years of Girl Scouting changed how Sunday, Aug. 9 turned out.”

~ Angela, Mother to Girl Scout Isabel

“I am honored to be recognized, but the thing that impacts me the most is knowing that I helped the girls from an unfortunate situation and got them to safety,” Isabel says.

She attributes her quick action to many of the skills she developed in Girl Scouts. “Skills that stand out to me are decision-making, watercraft skills, and most importantly being a girl of confidence,” she says.

Isabel is an active member of the Girl Scout Leadership Network and also serves as a girl member on the GSWISE Board of Directors.

“I know [both] my daughters’ experiences in Girl Scouts have played a significant role in their willingness to help others, knowledge to be prepared, and to step up when they are needed,” said Angela, Isabel’s mother and troop leader. “There is no doubt in my mind that Isabel’s 11 years of Girl Scouting changed how Sunday, August 9 turned out.”

Lifesaving Awards have been a part of Girl Scouts since Girl Scouting began in the United States in 1912. These awards recognize Girl Scouts from 5 to 17 years of age who have heroically saved or attempted to save a life, demonstrating skills and judgment beyond the degree of maturity and training to be expected at their age.



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Dear Girl Scout Friends,

When I think of where we were one year ago—camps closed for the summer, girls and volunteers adjusting to virtual meetings, and a community struggling through a pandemic, a racial reckoning, and economic hardships—I am heartened to look at where we stand today.

As we emerge from the pandemic, I am optimistic about our future as a Girl Scout council and a community. And I hope you are, too. Inspiration and hope are flourishing at GSWISE. Our council is full of incredible young women like Isabel, who received a National Lifesaving Medal of Honor when she demonstrated the principles of courage, confidence, and character and rescued a group of young girls during a choppy day on the lake (page 3). Our Girl Scouts continue to see beyond limitations and seize opportunities, like the Junior troop that came together to complete their first Journey virtually and create a Take Action Project with council-wide impact (page 2).

Donors like Marilyn John, who extend their generosity and support us in so many ways, inspire and sustain all of us. Just recently, Marilyn, a longtime GSWISE supporter, underwrote a week at CampHERO for one of our campers this summer (page 2).

And I have to smile when I think about camp this year. We know that in natural outdoor settings, girls gain confidence and independence, which help them discover their potential and their ability to lead. So we are elated to reopen our camp properties, with a proactive plan in place to keep camp as safe as possible, giving girls the opportunity to enjoy in-person outdoor experiences once again.

Donors like you made it possible for us to thrive this past year. Please continue to stand with us and support Girl Scouts. Together, we will continue to empower the girls who are changing the world.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Christy L. Brown, JD
GSWISE Chief Executive Officer



Christy L. Brown, CEO