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Girl Scout Michela:
Receives Inaugural GSUSA
Gold Award Scholarship

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Trailblazers in Action



Members of the Trailblazer troop demonstrate their ability to start fire and tie knots on a free-standing rope bridge they built.

In 2016, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast started a Trailblazer troop to provide teen Girl Scouts ways to engage in high-adventure activities in wilderness areas. Trailblazers develop skills in orienteering, survival camping, trail hiking, and environmental stewardship - all relevant skills that shape what they do in the future.

Steve Monsen has served as Trailblazer troop leader since the beginning. What started as an opportunity for him, his Girl Scout daughter, and seven others to explore cool places and do rigorous activities that many believe are too hard for girls, has evolved into a strong troop of 25 Girl Scouts. They have climbed mountains in Colorado, hosted annual Camporees with other troops, and participated in trail reconstruction, to name just a few of their activities. The troop is planning their next grand adventure to Alaska, where they will backpack across glacier crossings and ice climb.

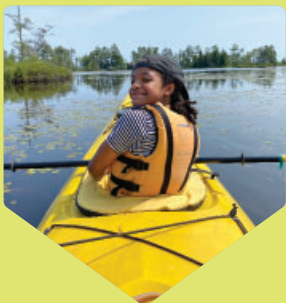
“The girls grow in confidence and with integrity – they go from saying ‘I can’t do that!’ to being self-sufficient,” said Steve. “They know how to keep composure in a crisis, they create their own shelter, carry all their own gear, cook for the troop, and understand how their behaviors impact the environment.”

“At the beginning, I felt nervous, but we practiced all these skills, like how to start fire and how to use axes, and I had so much fun on my first Survival Weekend,” said Corah, a Girl Scout Cadette and new member to the troop.

“This troop has taught me how to be a leader,” said Morgan, a high school senior who has been with the Trailblazers for four years. “As a Senior Patrol Leader, I learned to plan and run troop meetings, practiced time management, and got real-life experience teaching younger Girl Scouts outdoor skills.”

Support from donors like you helps Girl Scouts grow their survival and life skills.

Family Ties: Chester and Read Families Keep Girl Scouting Strong Through the Generations



The Chester and Read families represent one of the strongest examples of the Girl Scout legacy. In 1921, Alice Chester organized the first Girl Scout council in Milwaukee. Her daughter, the late Marion Chester Read, and granddaughter, Alice Read, provided strong leadership to Girl Scouts on local, national, and international levels. Alice Read served as her daughter’s troop leader, and she now eagerly awaits the day when her three-year-old granddaughter - the family’s fifth generation in Girl Scouts - can join as a Daisy.

“Girl Scouts has enriched our family’s lives in so many ways, from the people we have met and the experience itself,” Alice Read said. “Individually, it helps girls learn to be strong.”

Two aspects of Girl Scouting have been embraced by the family through the generations: a love of the outdoors and a commitment to help others in need. Alice Chester so loved the outdoors that in 1924 she used birthday money given to her by her father to help purchase the beautiful property that is now known as Camp Alice Chester, a property that has been enjoyed by thousands of girls through the years.

The family’s commitment to service has resulted in significant volunteer and financial support to grow and develop Outreach Girl Scout troops, making Girl Scouts accessible to more girls.

In addition to laying a strong foundation, valued partners, like the Chester and Read families, continue to make it possible for girls to turn their dreams into realities through Girl Scouting.

Thanks to the generosity of the Chester and Read families, thousands of girls have enjoyed Camp Alice Chester through the years.

GSWISE Girl Scout Michela Receives Inaugural GSUSA Gold Award Scholarship

Project Addresses Students' Mental Health Issues During Pandemic



Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GWISE) Girl Scout, Michela, was recently awarded an inaugural Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) Gold Award Scholarship in recognition of her Gold Award project, “Empathy in Action.”

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Michela addressed a very topical and critical issue facing students today: sharp increases in mental health problems that became worse during the pandemic.

“All around me, I could see the impact the isolation, cancelled plans, and disrupted schedules was having on friends and classmates. I couldn’t just sit back and do nothing. I had to find ways to help...like a Girl Scout,” Michela explained.

Michela created and shared resources with her high school’s staff and student body to help classmates learn about mental health issues and identify when and where to seek help. Her project encouraged self-reflection and provided opportunities to connect with peers to help students maintain their mental and emotional wellbeing during such a tumultuous time. She organized a week-long virtual mental health campaign emphasizing

scientific-based coping strategies, which were shared broadly with her school community. To ensure the project’s sustainability, she helped establish a psychology club, which will maintain resources to students for years to come.

“Sustainability was very important to me. When you are educating people, you are providing information that they can carry forward throughout all aspects of their lives,” Michela said.

GSUSA launched the Gold Award Scholarship program this year to recognize and provide financial support to one Gold Award Girl Scout per council whose Gold Award project demonstrates extraordinary leadership, measurable impact, and sustainability. As a scholarship recipient, Michela received special recognition during the 2021 Girl Scouts Change the World celebration that was held virtually on October 9 and a \$2,060 scholarship.

Michela currently is a freshman at the University of Minnesota.

Thank you – Donors like you help girls like Michela make a difference in their communities.

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131 South 69th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53214

gswise.org • 800-565-4475

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Dear Girl Scout Friends,

Reflecting on the year, I am reminded that the work we do is increasingly important in our constantly changing world. While we all have been challenged recently, Girl Scouts continues to create spaces where girls can thrive, build connections, and make the world a better place.

I am inspired by Girl Scouts who take action and drive lasting change. Gold Award Girl Scout, Michela, is a testament to this – Michela recognized that high schoolers experienced increased levels of anxiety and isolation during the pandemic and developed a school-wide mental health awareness campaign to support her classmates (page 3). I am also encouraged as I see girls preparing for everyday leadership, like the 25 Trailblazer Troop Girl Scouts who are testing their strengths, practicing survival skills, and growing in confidence during high-adventure outdoor experiences (page 2). I am indebted to donors, like Alice Read, who provide lasting support so all Girl Scouts can dream and do (page 2).

As I look ahead, I am excited for opportunities where GSWISE can provide occasions to appreciate nature and learn about the environment at camps, meet more girls and families where they are in our communities with our new Girl Scout mobile, and support volunteers with resources so they can focus on what matters most: girls and their limitless goals.

Donors like you play a critical role in our Girl Scouts' successes. I am grateful for your ongoing assistance in making the Girl Scout mission happen. Together, we will continue to help girls be their best, bold selves and the innovative thinkers who will lead the next generation with courage, confidence, and character.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Christy L. Brown, JD
GSWISE Chief Executive Officer



Christy L. Brown, CEO