



Girl Scout Highest Awards Ceremony 2026



June 7, 2026
Camp Hoffman
2850 Ministerial Road
West Kingston, RI 02892

Welcome!

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the 2026 Highest Awards Ceremony! Today, we gather to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of our Girl Scouts who have gone above and beyond to earn nationally recognized levels of work and dedication based on service.

There is a strategy underway at Girl Scouts to expand the ways youth experience Girl Scouting to ensure our Movement is open and inclusive, meeting the needs of today. You are all here because you've incorporated the hardest route with the most lasting impact into your Girl Scouting experience.

Our Bronze Awardees are working in teams to create a positive impact in their communities, while our Silver Awardees are flexing their growing skills and commitment, and our most incredible Gold Awardees are exemplifying the highest standards of leadership, excellence, and service. Across the board, this is incredible work that serves to better our society.

It is important to call out that this year, we celebrate 9 Gold Awardees from across our Council! We hope you take these accomplishments with you and hold close the concept of "making the world a better place" wherever your path leads.

On behalf of GSSNE and the entire Girl Scout community, we congratulate each of the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awardees. May you continue to epitomize the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character throughout your future endeavors. The future is bright with our leaders out front!

Yours in Girl Scouting,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Borrelli-Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dana" and last name "Borrelli-Murray" clearly visible.

Dana Borrelli-Murray
Chief Executive Officer



Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.



Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.



Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

Special Thanks

Jen Hetzel Silbert, MSOD - Emcee



Jennie Silbert, co-founder of Spartina Consulting, has a knack for facilitating rich dialogue, a skill that has supported some of the highest rankings of the CIA, refugee camp survivors in post-civil war Liberia, and a statewide strategic planning process that engaged over 13,000 persons on complex issues such as education equity and earning power. All of her work is grounded in positive psychology. Infusing her strength-based work into her personal life, she co-authored the book *Positive Family Dynamics: Appreciative Inquiry Questions to Bring Out the Best in Families*. Jennie holds a Master of Science in Organization Development from Johns Hopkins University, a dual Bachelor of Science in Economics and International Studies from American University, and is a certified Culture Values Assessment (CVA) consultant. A TEDx speaker, DisruptHR change maker, fierce advocate for women's health, and marathon coach turned soccer mom to two lioness girls, Jennie serves on the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England and the Board of Governors of Leadership Rhode Island. She is based in southern Rhode Island with her husband, Tony, where you can find her paddleboarding, walking the dog, and aspiring to grow a green thumb.

Alison Hornung - Keynote Speaker



Alison Hornung is a passionate childhood cancer advocate and the former Miss Rhode Island 2024. A graduate of the University of Rhode Island, she holds degrees in Global Business Management, German, and Human Development & Family Sciences. Her advocacy began at age 12, inspired by her honorary "little sister" Ella, who courageously battled leukemia for three years. Ella's strength continues to drive Alison's mission to bring comfort, hope, and tangible support to children and families facing cancer.

As the founder of the Glimmer of Hope Foundation, Alison has raised nearly \$1 million to support childhood cancer awareness and holistic health initiatives. Her work has led her from local communities to national platforms, including speaking before Congress and serving on a panel at the White House for President Biden's Cancer Moonshot initiative.

Through Glimmer of Hope, she provides bald dolls to children undergoing treatment, empowers families with programming and resources, and champions legislation to fund pediatric cancer research. Alison's efforts have made her a nationally recognized voice for change, and a tireless advocate for families navigating the unimaginable.

Special Thanks

The Highest Awards Committee:

Carolyn Dyer
Julianne Fontana
Therese Hem
Michelle Jessop
Colleen McBride
Christine Zielinski

GSSNE thanks you for your continued commitment to the Highest Awards process and for your dedication to Girl Scouts!

Become a member for life—and you'll be a champion of girls for years to come.

You can champion the next generation of change-makers by investing in Girl Scouts and becoming a member for life. Your contribution will support Girl Scouts, which gives them a place to prepare for a lifetime of leadership. And, by becoming a lifetime member, you're joining a group of like-minded supporters and contributing to Girl Scouts' mission.

Graduating seniors can become a lifetime member for \$200 (normally \$400)! This makes the perfect graduation gift.



Graduating seniors are invited to join Alum Troop 1919!



Learn more at gssne.org/alum



2026 Highest Awards Ceremony

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Empathy is our best policy

Program of Events

Welcome & Special Guest Recognition

Pledge of Allegiance, Girl Scout Promise & Law

CEO Speech, Dana Borrelli-Murray

Acknowledgment & Pinning of Bronze Award Girl Scouts

Acknowledgment & Pinning of Silver Award Girl Scouts

Keynote Speech, Alison Hornung

Presentation & Pinning of Gold Award Girl Scouts

Young Woman of Distinction Award

Closing & Photos

Thank you for attending the 2026 Girl Scout Highest Awards Ceremony, we hope you enjoy this very special event!

We would like to thank our sponsors, Board of Directors, volunteers, staff, and the Highest Awards Committee for their support. Congratulations to our Gold, Silver, and Bronze Award Girl Scouts, and to their teams of parents, families, friends, siblings, leaders, peers, and teachers—thank you for all you do!



About the Girl Scout Bronze Award

The Girl Scout Bronze Award is the highest award a Girl Scout Junior in grades 4 through 5 can earn. When Girl Scouts work toward earning their Girl Scout Bronze Award, they uncover the important lessons in what it takes to leave a meaningful legacy in their community. After completing a Junior Leadership Award or Junior-level Girl Scout Journey, Girl Scouts are encouraged to identify issues they care about and explore the needs of their surrounding communities. The Girl Scout Junior builds a team with fellow Junior Girl Scouts (or chooses to go solo!) to develop a plan and complete a Take Action Project of 20 or more hours to earn the Girl Scout Bronze Award.



About the Girl Scout Silver Award

The Girl Scout Silver Award—the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette in grades 6 through 8 can earn—gives Girl Scouts the chance to show they are a leader who is organized, determined, and dedicated to improving their community. After completing the Bronze Award, a Cadette Leadership Award, or a Cadette Journey, Girl Scouts must identify an issue they care about, explore their community, create a Take Action Project, and put it into motion. The minimum time for earning the Girl Scout Silver Award is 50 project hours.



About the Girl Scout Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award—the highest award in Girl Scouting—has evolved from a long line of Girl Scout leadership awards which recognizes older Girl Scouts who make a difference in their communities. The Girl Scout Gold Award was first introduced in 1980, but has been known as the Golden Eagle of Merit (1916-1918), Golden Eaglet (1919-1938), Curved Bar Award (1940-1963), and the First Class Award (1938-1940, 1963-1980).

Approximately one million Girl Scouts have earned the Gold Award or its equivalent since 1916. Currently, an estimated five percent of Girl Scouts in grade 9-12 earn the Gold Award annually. The Girl Scout Gold Award recognizes the work of Girl Scouts who demonstrate leadership, culminating in 80 hours or more dedicated toward a Take Action Project that has a sustainable impact in the community.



About the Young Woman of Distinction Award

Our annual local Young Woman of Distinction Award will be presented to a Gold Award Girl Scout whose Gold Award project demonstrated a clear vision, resolve, and commitment to making the world a better place. The Young Woman of Distinction will receive a scholarship from Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England.

Bronze Award Girl Scouts



Troop 418, Wakefield, RI

Girls Assisting Shelter Pets

Allison Andrews, Brianna Colton, Samantha Harley, Evalyn Macht, Millicent Stapler

Troop 563, Barrington, RI

Composting with Barrington Farm School

Josie Baldwin, Adelyn Bush, Abigail Cerina, Michelle Denault-Palmer, Tess Flannick, Sydney Forman, Mary Ivanoski, Emerson Paire

Troop 53, North Scituate, RI

Comfort Care Bags

Katalina Barroso, Rebekah Floyd, Joselyn Smyth

Troop 212, Greenville, RI

Activity Blankets

Margaret Loiselle

Troop 965, North Kingstown, RI

Renewing the Garden

Alexine Blefeld, Blessing Culhane, Judy Elsara, Violet Fogell, Amaya Kuhns, Sage Kuhns, Madelyn Stern, Anita Urankar

Troop 5, Warwick, RI

Shoe Cubby for Wellville

Madeline Holt, Madison O'Neil, Autumn Richard

Troop 455, West Warwick, RI

Rainbow Memorial Bridge for the RISPCA

Hannah Eddy, Isabelle Gnirke-Wu, Alice Richardson

Troop 1034, Warren, RI

Bristol Animal Shelter Enrichment and Care

Elfriede Barlow, Vada Graham, Vivian Howarth, Madeleine Lalanne, Rachel Patterson, Tabithah Stanzione, Rosalie Vecoli

Bronze Award Girl Scouts



Troop 293, Warwick, RI

Kids Care Kits

Gwendolyn Cyr, Penelope Ryan, Catherine Whitehouse,
Vivian Yates, Josie Zonfrillo

Troop 434, West Greenwich, RI

Our Planet Has No Restart Button

Caprice Colasante, Zoey DiFusco, Kenzie Jordan, Ava Ko,
Giada Palazzo, Alexis Robbins

Troop 989, Riverside, RI

Project Hope

Caramia Belanger, Diem Bielecki, Kinley Blinn, Yinlon Chung,
Abagale Cosgrove, Emma Cruz, Estelle Gomes, Colette Hogue,
Kamryn Kamps, Zoey Labelle, Kaitlyn Lagarto, Genevieve
Machado, Paige Mancini, Geovanna Raposo, Abiageal Stanek,
Evelyn Tvrzik, Elliot Wall, Lily Zullick

Troop 1311, Wakefield, RI

Trash Bash!

Maryn Allenson, Phoebe Austin, Piper Breau, Taylor Clarence,
Ellie Costello, Quinn Deutschman, Bella Esposito, Maisie
Garvin, Juniper Mayoh, Eleanor Mohr, Quinn Roberts,
Beatrice Ruedakurto, Nevaeh Sekator, Amelia Shaughnessy,
Sydney Siefert, Zada Sowers, Edith Wells

Silver Award Girl Scouts



Samantha Brailsford
Troop 197, Cumberland, RI
Operation Octopus

Cailin Grzybowski
Troop 432, Exeter, RI
Food For The Needy

Aubrey Nascimento
IRM, North Providence, RI
Fairy Trails

Avery Nettles
Troop 178, Pawtucket, RI
Hygiene Pantry

Grace Poethke
Troop 284, Coventry, RI
Teen2Teen: Teenager Resource Center

Violet Richardson
Troop 432, Exeter, RI
Recruitment Redesign

Ashley Schopac
Troop 284, Coventry, RI
Teen2Teen: Teenager Resource Center

Emma Trainor
Troop 284, Coventry, RI
Teen2Teen: Teenager Resource Center

Gold Award Girl Scouts



Noelle Blais
Rehoboth, MA

Act Local, Impact Global

What is your project about?

My project is an interactive, wooden game for elementary school children to play with at the library. It was designed to be fun, while teaching the children about climate change, and to make the idea of it less scary by providing simple tasks they can do to

ease the effects. While unveiling my project, kids immediately came up to it and began to play with it; they also asked me lots of questions about it, showing their interest. This project is intended to teach children about climate change and get them to care about it early on, to foster a group of adults who care about their Earth around them.



Tarynn Blais
Smithfield, RI

Hope Don't Shop

What is your project about?

Each year, numerous rabbits are given as pets, especially at Easter time. Unfortunately, most people do not know how to properly care for rabbits and 80% of the rabbits that are given as gifts are abandoned within a few weeks. Most of

these rabbits don't live until their first birthday. My Gold Award project educated people as to what being a responsible rabbit owner entails, and how to properly care for pet rabbits.



Sophia Dutra
Pawcatuck, CT

Little League Recycling Program

What is your project about?

My Gold Award aimed to address the lack of recycling at the Stonington Little League in Pawcatuck, CT. By implementing a recycling program and providing education on the importance of recycling and how to recycle, this helped the

organization & the town, to make the world a better place by using our resources wisely and avoiding waste. For our first year, we recycled approximately eight 2-yard dumpsters of recyclable items that would otherwise end up in a landfill is the equivalent of saving approximately 118.4 cubic yards of landfill space.

Recycling consumes 66-79% less energy than creating new plastic from raw materials, decreasing reliance on fossil fuels. Through the support of the Little League organization, this program will continue on and remain impactful for our community.



Allyson Faubert

Westerly, RI

Resource Information for our Community

What is your project about?

I created a user friendly digital binder to give residents, especially newcomers, easy access to local programs, events, services, and contacts, addressing the lack of centralized community information. I collaborated with recreation center staff and local realtors to gather accurate content and ensure wide distribution, including hosting it on the recreation center's website. By leading a team and organizing the project, I built a sustainable resource that increases community engagement and awareness over time.



Kristen Gudz

Portsmouth, RI

Caring Cases

What is your project about?

For my Gold Award, I partnered with the organization Case For Smiles that sews pillowcases with fun patterns to be distributed to kids in children's hospitals so they can feel more confident and at home in a different environment. I also widened the range of my project by donating some of the pillowcases to

Hasbro Children's Hospital and the rest to Child and Family Services, a local foster care organization. I led 3 successful events, 2 for Girl Scouts and one for my church, to teach a variety of people how to make the pillowcases. The events were held in a rotational assembly line style so all attendees could experience every part of the pillowcase making process: choosing the fabric, cutting, pinning, and sewing. I also created a club at my high school, where we meet once a month to make pillowcases. Upon completing my project, over 130 pillowcases had been created and donated to the two organizations.



Geena Kenyon

Hope Valley, RI

Pollinators in Need

What is your project about?

For my project, I saw a lack of talk of our important pollinators which are bees within the rise of climate change, and I wanted to raise the discussion of them and their importance. I made pamphlets and a slideshow that detailed the importance of bees and the harmful effects of pesticides and insecticides, and how

one could be more considerate towards bees and pollinators in general. The pamphlet went to my local libraries where they could be accessed by the community and the slideshow. I presented to Girl Scouts within my community and a group of second graders at a local elementary school. I decided to focus on sharing with younger girls, the impact of bees and why they are so important because they are the next generation of people who can make bigger and better changes for our world. The impact of my project was to teach the younger generation, the importance of taking care of our world.



Cathryn Mcquesten

Exeter, RI

Keeping the Tradition Alive: Women's Intro to Hunting

What is your project about?

Throughout my life, I have been heavily involved in the hunting community, and I have often noticed that it is very male-dominated. Many women are discouraged from participating or simply don't have access to the resources or guidance needed to begin. The root cause of this issue is not a lack of interest but a lack of opportunity, mentorship, and generational knowledge. To help solve this, I organized a women's pheasant hunt to create a supportive and accessible way for women to get involved. I organized and supplied all necessary equipment, as well as the leadership and structure for the event. I led a team of experienced hunting guides and volunteers. I reached out to individuals with different skills, including safety instructors and mentors, and made sure everyone had a role in making the event successful. Through fundraising and outreach, I raised over \$5,000 to cover all participant costs. Being able to make the event completely free helped remove financial barriers and allowed more women to participate. During the event, participants worked closely with experienced hunters and built strong connections. After the event, many stayed involved and continued those relationships. By the end of the event, each participant not only learned the basics of hunting but also became part of a community they didn't have access to before. This project took a lot of planning, leadership, and problem-solving, and allowed me to create something that made a real impact in a community I care deeply about.



Abigail Rogers

West Kingston, RI

Beautifying the Gilbert Stuart Museum

What is your project about?

My project was creating outdoor signage for the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum to give more information on the architecture, wildlife, and history of the museum, as well as making it easier to navigate.



Maya Shapiro

Wrentham, Massachusetts

Safe Space Mural

What is your project about?

For my Gold Award, I did a mural of the LGBTQ+ flag on the wall of King Philip High School with handprints of people in the school who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. On the mural there is a QR code that takes you to a website that explains what the project is. Within this website is a tab dedicated to papers of peoples experiences in the LGBTQ+ community that people can read and find a sense of belonging with others words. The website also has links to helpful resources. This mural has had the impact of helping people find their identity and help them feel comfortable in school knowing that it is an accepting environment.

Thank You!



500 Greenwich Ave
Warwick, RI 02886
401.331.4500
gssne.org