



Connections

**News for Girl Scouts of
San Jacinto Council supporters**
Fall 2023

Just Desserts

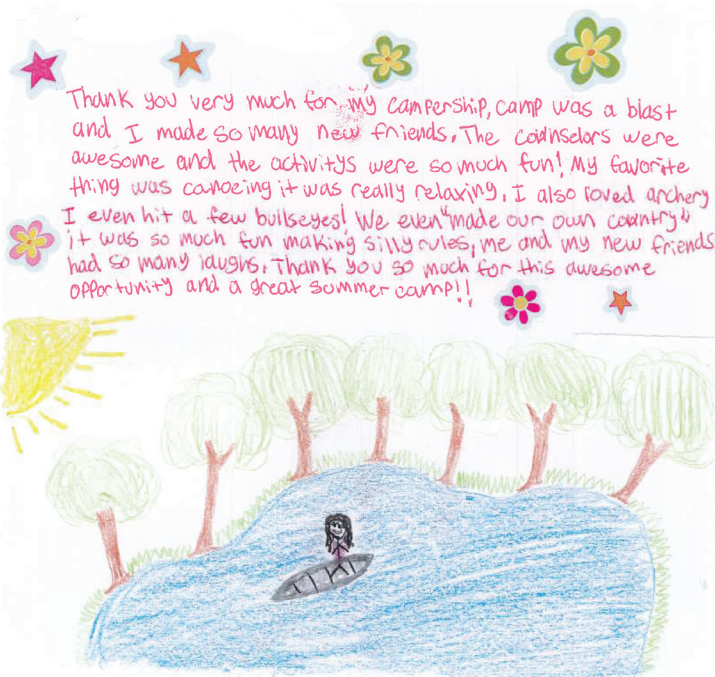
Mark your calendars for GSSJC's sweetest event on February 8, 2024.
Stay tuned for your invite! For more information
contact Katie Gordon at kgordon@sjgs.org.

Thank You for the Gift of Camp!

Camp was a success! GSSJC was able to provide 203 day and overnight Girl Scout camp scholarships this year...all made possible through your generous giving. **THANK YOU!**

First time Girl Scout campers, Dakota and Peyton, shared that they enjoyed making new friends, riding horses, and most of all are looking forward to camp next summer. Your generosity provides these opportunities for girls to learn about themselves, experience the outdoors, and ultimately build self-esteem. You are an essential part of making these experiences possible and we are grateful for your support.

GSSJC is committed to providing life-changing experiences for girls who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend camp. Help us share the magic of camp by making a gift to camp scholarships. For more information, contact Ruth Delaunay at rdelaunay@sjgs.org or 713-292-0273.



2023 Success to Significance Luncheon

featuring Katherine Center

Tuesday, September 26, 2023
11:30 a.m.

Check in begins at 11 a.m.

Hilton Americas, 1600 Lamar Street, Houston



Katherine Center, New York Times bestselling author of nine novels, is a Girl Scout alumna. The movie adaptation of Katherine's novel, "Happiness for Beginners," is now showing as a Netflix original. Hear Katherine's inspiring story of overcoming challenges before getting a dream-come-true book deal!

Ticket and sponsorship information:



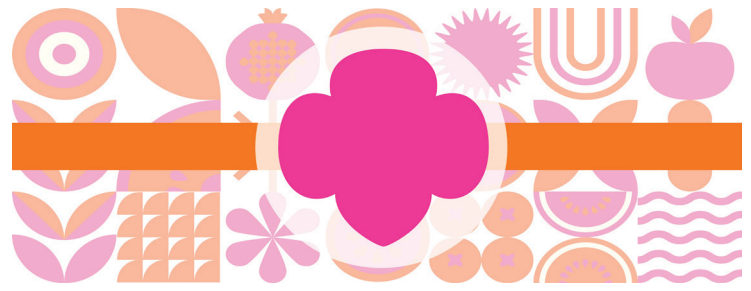
Women's Leadership Network Collect Backpacks

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council's Women's Leadership Network recently attended a summer social that highlighted the impact of GSSJC's community outreach programs. The network also collected 20 backpacks during the event at SheSpace to benefit girls enrolled in the programs.

These staff-led programs provide girls living in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting – a chance they might not otherwise have due to limited access to volunteer resources. Girls gain skills that will help them reach their full potential, equipping them to be leaders in their homes, schools, and communities and excel academically.

We invite you to be a part of our collective commitment to provide girls with extraordinary experiences that help them succeed at home, at school and in our community. Your support allows us to continue to serve girls who need us most through our Community Outreach program and to provide financial assistance so that the cost of membership or a vest never stands in the way of a girl pursuing her dreams or achieving her full potential as a Girl Scout.

For more information about how to get involved in WLN, contact Diane Likeness at dlikeness@sjgs.org.



Mary Vitek, CEO of GSSJC, welcomed Stephanie Tsuru, founder of SheSpace who shared the vision of creating an environment to empower women through a premier female-focused coworking space.

Thank you, Bank of America

GSSJC is excited to share that Bank of America recently named us as a grant recipient. We're honored to be supported in our mission as we continue to strive in delivering our program to every girl everywhere.



Thank You, Donors!

Great care has been exercised to ensure the proper recognition of our donors. If an error or omission does occur, we apologize and hope you will bring it to our attention. Contact Suzanne Cormona at scormona@sjgs.org. Contributions made April 1 - June 30, 2023

\$500,000+ - Gold
United Way of Greater Houston

Chevron Phillips Chemical Company
Janet Clark
ConocoPhillips Company
Ellen R. DeSanctis
EOG Resources, Inc.
Sue Kean and Grady Walker
Candice E. Koederitz
Angela Martin-Worthington
Natalie Meador
Moody National Bank
Anika Muslawski
Shauna G. Noonan
Shell Oil Company
Jamie Vazquez

\$25,000-\$49,999 - Ambassador
Bank of America
Texas Parks and Wildlife
United Way of Mid & South
Jefferson County

\$10,000-\$24,999 - Senior
Girl Scouts of the USA
Fred and Mabel R. Parks
Foundation
Melinda Reeves
SheSpace

\$250-\$999 - Brownie
Amazon Smile Foundation
Evelyn Angelle
Andrea Cavalier
Molly Determan
Entergy Texas Inc
ExxonMobil
Christi Gimenez
Gayle T. and Charles Green
Claudia W. Hayslip
Insperity Services LP
Corrie B. Jenkins
The Kroger Company
Janet McMasters
Michele McNichol
Margaret C. Montana
Tricia Moody

\$5,000-\$9,999 - Cadette
Holly Bayardo
The Dow Chemical Company
Harriet and Joe Foster
Foundation
Memorial Hermann
Wes and Jenette Pierce
Valero Energy Corporation
Whalley Foundation
Cathy Wining-Thomas and
Jim Thomas

\$1,000-\$4,999 - Junior
Anne V. Blount
Cetera Advisor Networks LLC

Michele Ohler
Sally Anne Schmidt
Dianna Singh
Kathy M. Tamer
Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board
Danielle Ward
Freddy Warner
Woodland Trails Community

Memorials In Memory of Dee Hinkle

Adrian Acevedo
Rebecca Altemus
Miner Alumni Association
Jo Blackburn
Dorothy F. Blefeld
Alice Bohlae
Dawn Golden Brule
Joanna Bustamante
Janet Clark
Ms. Conlon
Stephen Duncan
Mary L. Gedelian
Gayle T. and Charles Green
Helen Hatfield
Thomas I. Jackson
Corrie B. Jenkins
Madhav M. M Kulkarni
Bette B. Lehmsberg
Anita Lewis
Barbara Lewis
Ethel M. Lewis

John Lewis
Richard Minks
Margaret C. Montana
Rebecca Morgan
Evelyn Rightmire
Douglass Robison
Janie A. Sample
Paula Stevens
Kathy M. Tamer
Jamie Vazquez
Mary M. Vitek
Freddy Warner
Dan Wexler
Dorothy Wheatley
Tommy Williams
Marcelyn Woods
Miranda Young

In Memory of John F. Kelly
Fred Phelleps
Amy Thibodeaux

In Memory of Sandy DiSantis Sartorius
Laurie Bush

**Honorariums
In Honor of the GSSJC
History Committee**
Sandra N. Kuykendall

In Honor of Angela Vabulas
Heather McConnell

Website for Foster Teens Earns GSSJC Gold Award Girl Scout a \$10,000 Scholarship

Congratulations to Adison Smith, this year's GSUSA Gold Award Scholarship recipient for the Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council! The Gold Award Girl Scout received \$10,000 to help her pursue a college degree.

Adison received the scholarship based on the impact and sustainability of her Gold Award project, Myvoiceincourt, a website she created to assist teenagers aging out of the foster care system. Many foster children get lost in a bureaucratic maze when it is time to exit the state system. Adison's website provides these children, turned young adults, with a host of valuable resources to navigate the system and life beyond – and gives them hope for a brighter future.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America awards a scholarship every year to one Gold Award Girl Scout in each council across the country for their outstanding work on their Gold Award project. GSUSA increased the scholarship amount from \$1,000 to \$10,000 this year and announced this year's recipients in July.



GSSJC President Betsy Kamin, Adison Smith, and GSSJC CEO Mary Vitek

The Gold Award is the highest award a Girl Scout can earn. Only Ambassadors and Senior Girl Scouts are eligible to earn this award. Girls choose a community issue dear to them and develop a sustainable solution. They then must spend up to 80 hours planning, implementing, and sharing their project with others.

Receiving the Gold Award scholarship “is an incredible feeling and a moment I’m very proud of,” Adison said. “I went through the hills and valleys with motivation, but I’m so happy for pushing myself to complete my project. Being recognized by GSUSA; that’s national! I feel propelled to do more because of it, and it shows me anything I put my mind to can be as successful as this.”

What influenced Adison's interest in creating the website for her Gold Award project goes back to when she was a little girl. She spent a lot of time in the Harris County family courts with her mother, a family lawyer, watching court proceedings that determined the fate of foster care children. She also went on home visits with her mother, where she got a glimpse at life in foster care. “When the time came to do a Gold Award project, I knew I had to do something with this,” Adison said. “I have seen kids removed from a home at 6 or 7 years old, stay in the system, and move from foster home to foster home with no stable foundation. At age 14, they lose hope and interest in the future. It makes me sad. Kids don't understand the system. I want to empower them. I knew with the website I wanted to make the system less daunting and frustrating for teens,” she said.

Adison had a lengthy conversation with her mother, who gave her information that helped the Girl Scout put the pieces together for her project. She capitalized on her connections within the family court system she developed over the years to bring her project to fruition. Those connections allowed her to interview family court judges, lawyers, and state Child Protective Services and Department of Family Services officials to glean additional information about the foster care system.

After viewing all sides of the system, Adison realized why foster teens have challenges navigating the system – information is scattered and disjointed. That is when she began laying out the framework for her website – a comprehensive, easy-to-understand, one-stop source for foster care teenagers. The website includes valuable contacts, legal definitions, and information on how and where to get legal help. Also, it lists resources for post-care assistance, schooling, employment, and medical care. In addition to the website, Adison created flyers with facts about the foster care system, which she posted at her school, St. Agnes Academy in Houston.

Adison said she could not have completed the project without help from her team of judges and lawyers, who provided information and spread the word about the website, and students from her school who helped her create the website. Her biggest supporters, she says, were family attorney Josette LeDoux and local retired Judge Mike Schneider. LeDoux served as her project mentor. Schneider has agreed to keep the website updated while she attends school. So far, her website has garnered more than 4,000 views.

“I’m very humble about it. I never thought my project would be this much of a success,” she said. “I’m extremely moved by the thought of it spreading throughout Harris County and beyond, impacting the lives of so many young people.”

Adison, who has also earned Girl Scout Bronze and Silver awards, will attend Emory University in the fall to study biology and pre-medicine.



girl scouts 
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Nacogdoches Area United Way Day of Caring

Eaton employees joined Girl Scout staffers at Camp Whispering Pines to clean campsites in June as part of the sixth annual Nacogdoches Area United Way Day of Caring. The volunteers cleared debris from cabins, trails, and locations where Girl Scouts gather for activities.

United Way Day of Caring is a community-wide effort that brings volunteers and local businesses together to work on short-term, project-focused volunteer service with nonprofit and public organizations.



Donate now!

Raising Awesome Girls Series

The challenges of today’s world don’t only affect grownups. Young people—especially girls—are facing a mental health crisis of their own. GSSJC supports them as they grow and face life’s complexities.

The CDC recently reported that 57% out of more than 17,000 girls surveyed, reported feeling “persistently sad or hopeless in 2021”. Teen girls are experiencing record high levels of violence, sadness, and suicide risk.

GSSJC’s Women’s Leadership Network, in partnership with Crime Stoppers of Houston, facilitated an honest discussion about the nexus between social media and mental health. Adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media are at increased risk of mental health problems, according to research by the Journal of the American Medical Association Psychiatry.

Ernie Reyes, representing Crime Stoppers of Houston, provided valuable information on simple steps to create a healthy social media environment at home and gave parents tips on how to use existing tools to create a good balance. GSSJC is proud to stand with parents as they raise up the next generation of female leaders.

To build girls of courage, confidence, and character, please consider making a gift that makes a lasting impact at www.gssjc.org/donate. For additional information on the Women’s Leadership Network, contact Diane Likeness at dlikeness@sjgs.org.



Ernie Reyes, statewide manager for the Safe School Institute.



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