

Adrienne Spivey's Gold Award Project: Understanding the Early Stages of Alzheimer's Disease for Kids



Earning a Gold Award is not easy -- but the rewards, for yourself, your community, and your future are worth the effort.

We ask Gold Awardees to give other Girl Scouts who are considering a Gold Award Project a realistic idea of what is involved. Below, Adrienne Spivey tells us about the challenges and rewards she encountered while implementing her project.

What was your Gold Award Take Action project?

My Award project involved educating children about Alzheimer's disease. I created and produced a video to help children understand changes they may see in their elderly relatives and feel more confident interacting with them.

How did you come up with your idea? My grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease when I was very young. I didn't understand why she would do or say certain things. With my project, I wanted to help other kids with the same problem I had.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? Not really. I came into the project knowing its importance, and that actually inspired me, rather than intimidated me.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? I handed out cards with the link to my video on Youtube at local senior centers, Alzheimer's care groups, and the classes I presented my video to. Teachers at the schools I presented at even came up to me and asked for cards!

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? Never. I wanted to earn this award more than anything, and I knew how much it would help others.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you?

Every time I presented the video, the kids would have great feedback. At one presentation, a little girl asked me "How do you join your troop?" I replied with "Do you mean how do you join Girl Scouts?" She then said "No, how do I join *your* troop?" It was so sweet and touching. Not only had I inspired her to join Girl Scouts, but she wanted to be in a troop with me. It was so cute.

How will people benefit from this? Little kids who are confused by their grandparents' symptoms of Alzheimer's will have explanations for their grandparents' behavior and answers to their questions.

How did you feel after you finished? I felt so proud and that I had really accomplished something great. I truly believe that I've made a lasting impact and that I've helped - and will continue to help - kids confused by the disease.

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award? I understand that it's difficult to juggle school, activities, and work, so I understand how taking on a serious Girl Scout project could seem impossible. Think about the difference you will make by doing it, though. Think about the lives you'll change. Think about how you'll be campaigning for something you not only believe in, but that you created. This project may seem overwhelming, and even be a bit challenging at times, but the outcome and the rewards are worth it all.

Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you? I realized how many kids are going through what I went through. I learned how to talk and relate to different age groups, and I definitely think I improved my public speaking skills. From this experience, I will take away a sense of pride from helping little kids understand the early stages of Alzheimer's, and from earning such a prestigious award.