

Maddie Tomaso” Gold Award Project: Teen Literacy Council

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, Maddie Tomaso tells us about the ups and downs of her experience implementing her project.



How did you come up with your idea? I have always loved reading. I felt that through my love of reading, I could encourage other teens to help volunteer, as well as work with different agencies to help promote literacy.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? The length of time needed to complete the project was very long. The amount of impacts needed and the initial writing of the proposal was very hard. Trying to plan and convey my ideas to the committee was very hard.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? Keeping the momentum up was easy because I established a council that met twice a month to discuss issues, plan events, and prepare for tutoring. By having meetings on a regular basis, members were held accountable.

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? Collecting money and the teen literacy council not being sponsored was very difficult. I was very discouraged after my first meeting and the length of time before I was able to meet again was very frustrating. I felt that I needed to get cracking, yet needed to wait for the go ahead.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you? I believe having another teacher from another school contact me regarding our Teen Literacy Council asking for help. We were able to help her out and even donated books to the head start program. She later sent an email to the sponsor teacher as well as the principal. Having the interest of another organization outside of Girl Scouts really confirmed that I chose the correct project.

How will people benefit from this? Students at Fairhope High School will benefit because they will be in leadership positions. I also believe that the Boys and Girls Club will also benefit from the constant support of the high school students. Having a relationship with the elementary library as well as the public library will be great for all of the elementary school principals.

How did you feel after you finished? I am still not finished with the volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club. I will even be a paid employee this summer gaining valuable work experience. When I finished my final paperwork, I felt overjoyed. Having to finish the final

paperwork and the final weeks of high school was so, so hard. However, it would have not nearly been as effective project had I started when I was younger. I felt that I would not have had the communication skills to deal with issues from the committee, principals, directors of Boys and Girls Club, as well as other activities.

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award?

Communicate. Using your communication skills to secure your project is vital. Being able to discuss concepts and organized your thoughts is so important not only for the committee but for all the skills you will need. I put my final project into a power point. It helped me to stay an topic for the final review and looked amazing

Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community; did it change you?

Being able to communicate ideas with adults was by far one of the best skills that I learned during this process. I had to approach many different agencies as well as communicate with peers.