

Bailey Sawyer's Project: Promoting Theatre Arts to Students



Please give an overview of your Gold Award Project. The issues I chose to address through my project were promoting the arts to high school students, especially though who do not have access to theatre at their schools, and promoting Playhouse-in-the-Park, an available theatrical resource that fewer high school students have been taking advantage of lately, to middle and high school students. After having my idea approved by my project advisor at Playhouse, I worked on my proposal paperwork and edited it until I felt it was ready to submit. I had to take more time to brainstorm and problem solve after receiving some corrections that the Gold Committee felt were necessary for me to work out before moving on with my interview. Once I completed my revisions and my proposal interview, I was ready to begin implementing my project

How did you come up with your idea? I love acting and participating in the arts, so from the beginning I was set on doing a project that would be centered around the arts somehow. I also wanted to help out Playhouse-in-the-Park, a local youth theatre where I spent most of my high school career acting and dancing. It took me a long time to come up with a feasible idea. Initially, I kept getting stuck on ideas that just weren't possible, like buying new lights for Playhouse. Eventually, I began to work with an idea of holding a community-wide talent show at Playhouse for any interested students. I sat down with my advisor to work out the remaining details and issues, which caused us both to realize that this project would probably be too risky and too hard to complete within my limited time frame. It was then that we modified this idea into that of holding a theatre arts seminar rather than a talent show.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? I was very intimidated initially; I had trouble imagining myself actually getting through eighty hours' worth of work to be done! After I finally got through the planning process and the proposal paperwork and interview, I felt less daunted and ready to get to work.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? Setting deadlines helped me the most when it came to keeping the project going. As soon as my project was approved, I set a date for the theatre arts seminar and began calling the various schools I would be presenting to so that I could set an appointment to speak to their students. By doing this at the beginning, I felt motivated to set aside time to work on everything that needed to be done before these dates arrived. When it finally came time to make my presentations and hold the seminar, I felt very prepared.

Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that? There were many moments throughout the process when I felt discouraged. Sometimes it was when I was in the very early stages of my project and felt I simply couldn't get everything done before the deadline in July, and other times it was when I faced serious obstacles that would randomly pop up

during the process. I always felt tempted to quit, but I knew that I would be disappointed in myself if I didn't keep pushing onwards. While it might have been a relief to quit in the midst of all the other things I had going on in my senior year, I knew that in the long run I would regret never finishing my project out. I had gotten my Bronze and Silver Awards as a younger scout, so I also felt motivated by the idea that there would be no better way to tie up my final moments in Girl Scouts than by getting the Gold Award.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you? I'm very happy with how the seminar went, not only because the participants all responded positively about their experience but because they all had such a great time with one another. Most of them were all strangers upon arriving, but by the time they left, they were all laughing loudly and seemed much closer than people who had just met 3 hours ago. Going into the seminar, I was mainly hoping for a good turnout and positive responses from the participants, but I was so delighted by this unexpected result.

How will people benefit from this? Through this project, I managed to reach at least 500 high school students in the area about the arts and local theatre opportunities that are open to them, and I managed to leave 12 students with new artistic knowledge and skills that they might not have had otherwise. Through this project, I have also begun what I feel will be the reestablishment of awareness of the opportunities offered by Playhouse-in-the-Park in middle and high school students, many of whom were unfamiliar with the community theatre before my presentations and/or my seminar. I also hope that my project will encourage more girls to pursue completing a Gold Project focused on the arts.

How did you feel after you finished? It felt amazing to be done with my project! It was so satisfying to have stuck it out to the end and to have had what I felt was a satisfying ending to my project. It's nice to leave this project with a sense of accomplishment.

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award? You've all probably heard this before, I know I did when the opportunity to begin my Gold Award opened up, but my biggest piece of advice would be to complete your project at some point in your high school career that isn't your senior year! With all of the school work you have when you're a senior coupled with applying for college, adding a project as big as the Gold Award to your To-Do list is a major stress! I managed to work in small tasks relating to my project throughout my senior year, but it really wasn't until I had breaks from school (or was finally out of school) that I really managed to get work done. Had I been able to get more work done earlier, I would've been able to hold the seminar earlier, while school was still in session, and would most likely have been able to encourage more students to participate. Regardless, I'm proud of my hard work and what I managed to accomplish within the timeframe I had.

Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you? If so, how? Did you learn new skills, or change your outlook on an issue? What will you take away from this experience? I was never much of a leader during my high school career, so my Gold Project was my first real opportunity to be in charge of something and lead others. In the beginning stages of my project, I was insecure in this position of leadership, which could lead to miscommunication and other added issues. As my project progressed, though, I began to find more confidence in this new role. While I still have my moments of insecurity, I do feel that my Gold Project has been a source of newfound confidence that I wouldn't have at this point in my life otherwise.