

Madeleine O'Mara's Gold Award: High School Recycling

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, Madeleine O'Mara tells us about the challenges and rewards she encountered while implementing her project.

How did you come up with your idea? The Girl Scout Law states that as a Girl Scout "I promise to use resources wisely..." I thought that starting a recycling program at my school would be a great way to uphold this Girl Scout Law.

Were you intimidated by the scale of the project? I wasn't really intimidated by the idea of the program. I did a lot of research and I bounced ideas off of my parents and school principal and this helped make implementing the program easy.

How did you keep up the momentum for the project? My classmates have gotten used to the recycling bins and it has become second nature for them to recycle paper and plastic water bottles. Every Friday afternoon, we go around and empty the bins and bring the recyclables to a nearby recycling drop-off.

Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you? Well, I knew my recycling program was working when I noticed the amount of recyclables was increasing each week. One day a classmate came up to me and told me that he had brought his recyclables from his home and that he would bring them to school each week so that it would be recycled and not thrown in the trash.

How will people benefit from this? It is so much better for us to be recycling materials instead of dumping everything into landfills. Our environment benefits and therefore, so do we.

How did you feel after you finished? It is great to be finished with the formal part of the Gold Award. I am still managing the recycling at school and I am anxious for the city of Montgomery to have the new recycling facility available so that everyone will be recycling

What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award? I know that high school can be difficult and it seems like it is hard to find time for everything, but it is important to focus on a quality project and make an impact in your community. I am very busy and I have the most demanding schedule that my school offers, but I found the time and I feel great because I achieved this.



Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you?

I guess that I take away from this project that if you put your mind to making a change or helping your community it is possible to do it. You need a good support system and the desire to see things through. I like to finish everything I start. I had previously earned both my Bronze and Silver Awards, so I knew I could do this, I just had to be organized and set time aside to get this done.