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Girl Scouts of the USA’s Top Executive, Sylvia Acevedo, to Deliver Keynote and Bestow Highest Honor for 20 Local Gold Award Girl Scouts On June 20

PORTLAND, Ore. – Girl Scouts of the USA’s top executive, Sylvia Acevedo, will recognize 20 local Oregon and Southwest Washington recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award in a virtual ceremony on Saturday, June 20, 2020, in celebration of 104 years of the organization’s highest award.

“The Girl Scout Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable and a Girl Scout’s highest achievement,” says Girl Scouts of the USA CEO Sylvia Acevedo. “I’m honored to be celebrating these amazing girls for all the incredible work they have done tackling issues that are important to them and driving meaningful and lasting change in their communities throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington and beyond.”

Ms. Acevedo plans to place a particular emphasis on the importance of STEM and Civic Engagement for girls in her remarks on Saturday. To learn more about Girl Scouts and STEM, please visit: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/girl-scouts-and-stem.html>. To learn more about Girl Scouts and Civic Engagement, please visit: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/girl-scouts-and-civic-engagement.html>

<p>Who: 20 Gold Award Girl Scouts, as well as Silver and Bronze Award Girl Scouts, their family and friends, plus staff, volunteers and media</p> <p>What: Live, virtual celebration of Girl Scouts changing the world and achieving Girl Scouts’ highest honors with a live keynote address from GSUSA’s Chief Executive Officer, <u>Sylvia Acevedo</u>.</p> <p>When: June 20, 2020, 1-2:30 p.m.</p> <p>How: Virtual, Microsoft Teams Events (<i>contact GSOSW for access</i>)</p> <p>Interested Media: Interested media should contact Sarah Shipe, Director of Communications, Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington at 503-930-5275.</p> <p>Phone and Skype/Zoom Interviews: GSUSA’s Chief Executive Officer, Sylvia Acevedo as well as GSOSW’s Chief Operations Officer, Paige Walker, Director of Communications, Sarah Shipe, and</p>

Program Director, Allie Roberts, will be available Wednesday, June 17 through Saturday, June 20, 2020 for media interviews by phone and Skype/Zoom.

The Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn, acknowledges each recipient's dedication to empowering and bettering herself while working to make the world a better place. "I learned how to coordinate a team of people in various positions to work toward a common goal," says Abigail Schipper, 2020 Gold Award Girl Scout. "About myself, I learned how to push past fear and to keep reaching out for help to ensure that the project gets completed." Just 6% of Girl Scouts earn this prestigious award annually—it has been the pinnacle of the Girl Scout experience since 1916.

Gold Award Girl Scouts apply leadership, passion, work ethic and creativity toward innovative solutions to society's most pressing challenges. Each Gold Award Girl Scout contributes a minimum of 80 hours to the community—often significantly more—through her project, carrying out a plan that has sustainable and measurable, ongoing impact.

"GSOSW is so proud of these 20 young women for their leadership and the impact they have made on their communities and the world," says Chief Operations Officer Paige Walker. "With projects addressing STEM education, the environment, diversity and inclusion, healthy living and more, these Gold Award Girl Scouts are leaders solving real, local problems and making a lasting difference."

The 2020 Gold Award Girl Scouts from Oregon and Southwest Washington are:

FLORENCE A., Corvallis, Oregon | Multicultural Harmony Mural

Florence designed and painted a mural focused on honoring cultural diversity at her church. She spoke to her congregation about donating supplies and presented information at church classes about the benefits of understanding and accepting other cultures. Florence also made her presentation available to others through a manual and video in the church library.

JOCELYN B., Portland, Oregon | Autism Awareness

Jocelyn led a team in the creation of a website and presentation to educate the general community about autism. The website is an overview of what autism is, with additional information about girls and autism. Her volunteers helped with the creation of the website using sources that Jocelyn found. The website is available to anyone with internet access at <https://autism-awareness5.webnode.com>. Jocelyn also created a presentation for troop leaders, which is accessible from her website.

CASEY E., Vancouver, Washington | S.I.V. (Suicide Awareness and Prevention Videos)

Casey created eleven videos geared to teenagers that address suicide. The videos include general information, helpline contacts, and interviews with people affected by suicide and those who have contemplated it. Casey worked closely with a mental health professional and posted the videos on social media and distributed information and links to principals in the local school district. Casey also distributed information on how to create additional videos.

HALEY F., Portland, Oregon | PDX Period Project

Haley and her team of volunteers organized donation drives to collect feminine hygiene products. Working with various shelters to distribute these products, Haley was able to provide basic feminine hygiene to a large population of women in the Portland area. Haley also created awareness pamphlets to educate the surrounding community about this issue.

ALEXIA G., Gladstone, Oregon | You Matter

To address the societal pressure on youth to be perfect with an unrealistic ideal body image, Alexia wanted to improve students' feelings of self-worth. After interviewing students to determine which inspirational words and phrases would be most effective, she and her peers cut the words and phrases out of vinyl and installed them on walls in 11 bathrooms in her high school. They advertised the project through social and school media. To ensure the sustainability of this project, school janitors will maintain and repair the vinyl lettering as needed.

GRACE H., Portland, Oregon | Project Lunchbox

Grace created "Project Lunchbox," a series of online videos and resources to educate teens about their eating choices and help them develop positive lifelong habits. Grace also created a tutorial on how she made these resources to inspire others to create their own.

ALISSA J., Hillsboro, Oregon | STEM Storage Lockers

Alissa and her volunteers designed and built six secure and movable storage lockers for STEM equipment for her high school's robotics club. One of the six was specially designed to hold equipment used by judges at robotics competitions. Alissa provided copies of the building plans and materials list to Oregon's Robotics Tournament and Outreach Program, her school district, and to an international STEM competition organization.

GABRIELLE K., Vancouver, Washington | Senior Safety

As a part of educating seniors about emergency preparedness, Gabrielle and her volunteers designed, packed, and distributed 100 emergency kits to independently living seniors. Gabrielle also created a video explaining the items in the kits, and how to replicate her project for additional distributions.

EMMA L., Portland, Oregon | Revitalizing a Dry Basin Area

Emma saw a need to restore an existing dry basin at her church in order to improve water quality and its overall appearance. Working with the church's maintenance staff and the city's public works department, Emma determined the steps necessary to remove and dispose of the non-native vegetation and found the appropriate native plants to replant. She then recruited, trained and directed volunteers to complete the restoration, and developed a website to describe the project and provide information about the role of dry basins in improving water quality. Emma also prepared instructions for regular maintenance of the dry basin by the church.

RACHEL L., Hillsboro, Oregon | Boys Build It STEM Camp

Rachel designed and ran a week-long STEM camp for middle school boys staffed entirely with women and high school girls. The camp not only exposed the boys to STEM topics, but increased the girls' self-confidence and normalized the idea of women role models in STEM areas. As a result of their participation as teacher-interns at the camp, some of the girls will be leading a similar camp next year.

GRACE M., Beaverton, Oregon | Be Beach Safe

Recognizing that Oregon has several accidental drownings in local waterways every year, Grace founded Be Beach Safe to educate children and adults about open water safety. Not only did Grace create a website and video teaching people how to be safe, she offered a class at the local library and educated over 200 people at various booths. In addition, Grace created Be Beach Safe posters that are on display at Henry Hagg Lake.

DEVAN N., North Bend, Oregon | Outdoor Archery Range

Devan created an archery range for youth in her area. Devan worked with a local sports park to set the location, secured grants to gain the necessary equipment, and then recruited a team to help create signs, banners, and install the new range. Devan recruited experts to help with construction as well as safety requirements. She also created a detailed list of instructions so that the local sports park can easily maintain the range for future use.

VINNA O., Bend, Oregon | Green School Certification

Vinna wanted her high school to be certified as a Green School. She recruited and trained a team of high school students to accomplish a first step towards certification—waste reduction at the high school. She also created a website and informational booklet that outlines all the remaining steps to achieve certification and left it with her school's environmental club for implementation.

ALYSSA P., Portland, Oregon | Companion Books to Fiction: Expanding Youth Interest in STEM

Alyssa created a series of booklets that describe real-life STEM research and innovations connected to fun, fantastical elements from popular fiction. She led a focus group to advise on popular books for her target age group and pull out science concepts from these books. Her second team helped her research, develop and publish the companion booklets for these science concepts. The booklets will be used in a local elementary school curriculum to help make STEM fun and relevant for students.

REBECCA R., Prineville, Oregon | Fountain for Friends

Seeing a need for a water fountain at a well-used local park that lacked any water source, Rebecca successfully advocated for her community to install a water fountain for use by athletes, cyclists, park visitors, and dogs. The local parks department has agreed to maintain the fountain and Rebecca has instructed other groups on how to advocate for more fountains.

ABIGAIL S., Portland, Oregon | Community Fun Run for West Tualatin View Elementary School

Abigail and her team of volunteers organized a community fun run to raise awareness for a decaying running path at the local elementary school. The run promoted physical activity in kids, called attention to the condition of the path, and motivated people to help the school refurbish the path. Abigail advertised her event through local businesses and media, and drew over 70 participants who left energized to help further the mission of refurbishing the running path.

AMELIA S., Portland, Oregon | Historic Neighborhood Walking Tour

Amelia created a walking historical tour of Northeast Portland's Laurelhurst neighborhood. The tour is available in audio and print formats and covers the history of the neighborhood, key landmarks, relevant historical figures and the houses they lived in, as well as Laurelhurst's famous park. Amelia led a team of volunteers to test the walking tour routes, narrate the audio tour, and create the print brochure version.

HANNAH T., Oregon City, Oregon | Sports and Nutrition Camp

Hannah and her team of volunteers put on a sports and nutrition camp for children. Participants played a variety of sports and learned about making good nutritional choices. In addition to the sports camp, Hannah gave a seminar to middle school students about nutrition, how to read food labels, and how to make better eating choices.

CHRISTA W., Oregon City, Oregon | Kits for Kids

To comfort sick children at Randall Children's Hospital, Christa wanted to provide them with items that they could use and enjoy. She gathered a team to make 40 kits, each consisting of a backpack filled with a fleece tie blanket, a scarf, coloring pages, a ring and lip balm. Her team obtained donations, posted fliers, contacted media and attended a slumber party hosted by Christa to make the tie blankets and assemble the kits. The hospital reports that the kits have been much appreciated. To sustain the project, a Girl Scout troop has agreed to make more tie blankets next year and hopefully inspire others to continue to make and distribute the kits.

LAUREN Y., Portland, Oregon | Shikata Ga Nai: An Inconvenient American

As the granddaughter of Japanese-American internees during World War II, Lauren wanted to give voice to the stories of internment camp survivors and educate future generations so this travesty will not be forgotten or repeated. She filmed interviews of several members of her family—who had been incarcerated as children in the Santa Anita Assembly Center and Heart Mountain Relocation Center—describing the economic and sociological impact on them. She then created a short documentary entitled "Shikata Ga Nai" ("It Cannot Be Helped"), incorporating US military propaganda footage and a tour of the Santa Anita Assembly Center. She has donated copies of the documentary to several groups which provide cultural and historical education about Japanese people in the U.S.

About Girl Scouts' Highest Awards

To learn more about Girl Scouts' highest awards—including the Bronze and Silver Awards—please visit: <http://www.girlscoutsosw.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-program/girl-awards/highest-awards.html>.

About Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington (GSOSW)

In partnership with nearly 8,000 adult members, Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington prepares more than 14,300 girls in grades K-12 for a lifetime of leadership, adventure and success. GSOSW's programs in Civic Engagement, the Outdoors and STEM serve girls in 35 counties in Oregon, and Clark, Klickitat and Skamania counties in Southwest Washington. The Girl Scout mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. For more information, please visit girlscoutsosw.org. Contact answers@girlscoutsosw.org with questions.

About Sylvia Acevedo, Chief Executive Officer, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

A lifelong Girl Scout, Sylvia Acevedo was appointed CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA in May 2017, coming full circle from her youth as a Girl Scout in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Through Girl Scouts, Sylvia discovered her passion for space, science, and math. Her interest in STEM subjects would lead her to a career as a rocket scientist, engineer, technology executive, and award-winning STEM entrepreneur.

Sylvia has championed girls in STEM, the outdoors, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Girl Scouts now earn badges in cybersecurity, robotics, design thinking, coding, eco awareness, high-adventure outdoor activities, and, of course, space science.

Sylvia has been an engineer and executive at Apple, Dell, Autodesk, and IBM. She began her career as a rocket scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where she created algorithms and analyzed data from Voyager 2's spacecraft flyby of Jupiter and two of its moons, Io and Europa.

A strong civic and education leader, Sylvia understands the role education plays in creating opportunities for children and developing the workforce of the future. She was one of the first Hispanic students, male or female, to earn a graduate engineering degree from Stanford University—

an MS in industrial engineering—and she holds a bachelor of science degree with honors in industrial engineering from New Mexico State University.

Sylvia has been recognized widely for her accomplishments in business and education, and for her work to bring more girls into the STEM pipeline. In 2018 she was named one of *Fast Company's* “100 Most Creative People in Business,” as well as “Cybersecurity Person of the Year” by Cybersecurity Ventures. *Forbes* named her as one of America’s Top 50 Women in Tech, and in 2019 *InStyle* magazine placed her at number seven on its list of “The Badass 50: Women Who Are Changing the World.”

Sylvia is the author of *Path to the Stars: My Journey from Girl Scout to Rocket Scientist*, a memoir for middle school students that inspires readers to live the lives of their dreams.

About Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

We're 2.5 million strong—more than 1.7 million girls and 750,000 adults who believe in the power of every G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ to change the world. Our extraordinary journey began more than 100 years ago with the original G.I.R.L., Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low. On March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Georgia, she organized the very first Girl Scout troop, and every year since, we’ve honored her vision and legacy, building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. We’re the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. And with programs from coast to coast and across the globe, Girl Scouts offers every girl a chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure, and success. To volunteer, reconnect, donate, or join, visit www.girlscouts.org.

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