



Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest

MEDIA ADVISORY

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GIRL SCOUTS OF THE DESERT SOUTHWEST TO HONOR THE BEST OF GIRL SCOUTING AT THE ANNUAL GIRL AWARD CEREMONY

Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest will honor the achievements girls made in 2009/2010 at the Annual Girl Award Ceremony on **May 23, 2010** from **2 - 5 p.m.** at the Scottish Rite Temple, 301 W. Missouri, El Paso, TX.

Girl Scouts being honored on this day represent the best of Girl Scouting and are the foundation of the Girl Scout mission: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. They dedicated many hours to achieve their goals.

Three girls will be presented with the highest award in Girl Scouting, the Girl Scout Gold Award. They are Lindsey Rees, Mattison Mierstchin and Katherine Wentworth. **See Gold Award project descriptions and bios below.**

Girls will also receive awards for Bronze and Silver Award projects, religious endeavors, and top cookie sales.

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Boilerplate for Girl Awards

About the Gold Award

Nationally, about 2,500, or 6%, of Girl Scouts age 14-18 earn their Gold Award each year. Someone once described the Girl Scout Gold Award as being "what you really want to be remembered for" in Girl Scouting. For many, the leadership skills, organizational skills, and sense of community and commitment that come from "going for the Gold" set the foundation for a lifetime of active citizenship.

About the Gold Award Project

The Gold Award project is the culmination of all the work a girl puts into "going for the Gold." It is something that a girl can be passionate about—in thought, deed, and action. The project is something that fulfills a need within a girl's community, creates change, and hopefully, is something that becomes ongoing. The project is more than a good service project—it encompasses organizational, leadership, and networking skills. To

earn the Gold Award, girls have to complete a seven step process. Some projects can take up to two years to complete.

About the Silver Award

The Girl Scout Silver Award represents a girl's accomplishments in Girl Scouting and her community as she grows and works to improve her life and the lives of others. The requirements of the Girl Scout Silver Award helps girls build skills, explore careers, become leaders, and make a commitment to self-improvement. Girls age 11-14 are eligible to earn the Silver award.

About the Bronze Award

The Girl Scout Bronze Award, the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can earn, requires her to learn the leadership and planning skills necessary to follow through on a project that makes a positive impact on her community. Working towards this award demonstrates her commitment to helping others, improving her community and the world, and becoming the best she can be.

About Religious Recognitions

The purpose of Girl Scout Religious Recognitions is to help girls discover the presence of God in their daily lives as members of a family, a parish and their community. All Religious Recognitions are administered by youth directors or an authorized representative from each faith.

About Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest

In partnership with 4,000 adult volunteers, Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest serves nearly 12,500 girls each year in 33 counties in West Texas and Southern New Mexico, and helps them discover new abilities, connect with new friends, and take action to improve their communities. Girl Scouts is the world's preeminent leadership development organization, building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. For more information visit www.gsdsw.org.

2010 Gold Award Recipients

Three Girl Scouts age 14-18 earned their Gold Award.

Lindsey Rees

Lindsey Rees is a Senior at Chapin High School here in El Paso. She has been a Girl Scout since she was a first grader and as a military child, Girl Scouting has seen her through moves within three different states, and 12 different schools. Girl Scouts has remained a constant source of guidance in Lindsey's young life. She began her Gold Award Project while volunteering with Fort Bliss as a Freedom Camp Counselor. She worked to help other children learn to cope with the deployment of their parents. This experience helped her to learn to cope with her own situations and became the foundation in developing KIDS, which stands for Kids Involved in Doing Service. Lindsey developed this organization so that it would coincide with some of the adult volunteer organizations offered at Ft. Bliss in hopes of recruiting more community involvement from fellow youngsters, as well as to provide a recognition ceremony for volunteer members of KIDS. Lindsey's Gold Award Project is a special one that will leave behind a legacy in that Ft Bliss has agreed to continue the KIDS program after Lindsey has graduated and moved on to college as a psychology major at Spring Arbor University in Michigan.

Mattison Mierstchin and Katherine Wentworth

The Gold Award Project of Mattison Mierstchin and Katherine Wentworth is a unique project that took over 200 hours of dedication, creativity, practice and attention to detail to complete. Both girls are self proclaimed lovers of books who enjoyed being read to as young girls. After brainstorming ideas for their Gold Award Project, the girls decided they wanted to share their joy of reading with other young students in the El Paso area. Becoming a fluent reader is not an easy task for everyone, especially when you consider different learning styles and language barriers. Wentworth witnessed firsthand her younger brother's struggle to enjoy reading due to his dyslexia. Mattison felt sad that so many children do not have someone to read to them and wanted to change that. Armed with this knowledge and hopes of providing El Paso area children with "someone to read to them," Mattison and Katherine decided to record their voices onto CD as they read aloud children's books. The girls felt that in recording themselves, it would alleviate some of the pain associated with sounding out words and their meaning so that all children can share in their love of books and knowledge. They obtained permission from publishing companies and used their cookie sales funds to purchase 80 books which were then donated to four different schools and children's homes in El Paso. They even went the extra step of creating activities and interactive games to play once the student or child completed reading along with the CD in order to support the student's comprehension. Upon graduation, Mattison will be attending Texas Tech University to study Dance and Creative Writing. She hopes to eventually own her own dance studio and write children's books. Katherine has plans to attend the University of Texas at Dallas and upon graduation, attend medical school.