



# **Lydia Fulton earns Girl Scout Gold Award – highest award in Girl Scouting**

by Erin Johnson

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**GLEN CARBON** – The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (GSSI) announced today that Lydia Fulton from Worden has earned the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can receive.

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Fulton wanted to encourage more girls to consider future careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, especially medical research. Having had opportunities to tour and do research in science labs, she knew how much first-hand experience can make a difference in building comfort and confidence in STEM.

With that in mind, she held a science day program for girls in grades 1-8 at St. Louis Children's Hospital, which was facilitated by fellow members of her high school's Science National Honor Society and other volunteers she recruited. Girls were able to engage in hands-on activities to learn more about genetics, DNA, anatomy, scientific research and the effects of smoking on the body. Older girls were invited to tour a research lab at Washington University, as well.

To recognize the personal impact that medical professionals can have on so many lives, girls also made cards for the faculty at St. Louis Children's Hospital and donated stuffed animals to patients there.

Fulton's project was such a tremendous success that it was featured in the student spotlight section of Town and Style, a St. Louis local magazine. While she appreciated the community support, she was most impressed with the feedback that girls shared on their post event surveys.

"I was overwhelmed by how positive the feedback was," she shared. "Everyone wrote that they learned something new, which was a success in itself. Some of the older participants even said that they had newfound interest in STEM fields because of the event. This was my ultimate hope. I felt empowered to make a difference and educate others."

Lydia is the daughter of Bob and Lucinda Fulton. She is currently a senior at Rosati-Kain High School in St. Louis and plans to attend college to study both neuroscience and music.

## **The Girl Scout Gold Award**

The Girl Scout Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can earn, recognizes a Girl Scout's commitment to excellence as she develops skills and values to meet present and future challenges in her life. To earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, a Girl Scout Senior or Girl Scout Ambassador must design and carry out a project that fulfills a need within a

girl's community, creates change, and is sustainable. The project must be completed with a suggested minimum of 80 hours of work. Only about 5 percent of eligible girls earn the prestigious Gold Award.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (GSSI) is a high-capacity Girl Scout council serving approximately 11,300 girls and engaging 4,550 adult volunteers in 40 ½ counties in Southern Illinois. GSSI Mission: Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. The Girl Scouts organization is the world's largest leadership development organization for girls. In partnership with committed adults, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives – such as strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth. Today's Girl Scouts not only enjoy camping and crafts, but they also explore math and science and learn about diversity, good citizenship, leadership and teamwork. Girl Scouting is the place where girls experience the fun, friendship and power of girls together. Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a not-for-profit organization supported by various United Ways throughout the region. Girl Scouts is a Proud Partner of United Way.

For more on the Girl Scouts, visit the GSSI Website [www.gsofsi.org](http://www.gsofsi.org) and follow GSSI on Facebook.