



Rising Stars: Victoria Tarpley earns Girl Scout Gold Award

by Erin Johnson
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GLEN CARBON – Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (GSSI) has announced that Victoria Tarpley from Roxana has earned the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can earn. For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Victoria used her experience with Girl Scouts robotics to mentor a local youth robotics team, as well as host kids' STEM workshops at the Roxana library.

“I have always had an interest in STEM and I wanted to share the importance of it with children in my community,” she explained.

Victoria had been a member of a successful GSSI robotics team in FIRST LEGO League (FLL), a global robotics program for students age 9-14 that engages them in programming robots, developing teamwork and researching real-world problems. She used this experience to help Motorized LEGO Maniacs, a robotics team from her community that is currently participating in FLL.

To start, she hosted a summer camp that included STEM professional guest speakers and field trips to area STEM sites including Melvin Price Lock & Dam, National Great Rivers Research and Education Center and Two Rivers Wildlife Refuge.



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She helped the team work on their technical skills, as well as develop what are known as the “Core Values” of FLL, which include teamwork, learning by doing, collective learning, friendly competition, sharing experiences with others and gracious professionalism.

She continued to mentor Motorized LEGO Maniacs throughout the FLL season – attending their practices and competitions to help reinforce the skills she introduced during summer camp. To sustain their efforts, she created a binder for the team that included tips and training exercises that they could continue to use into the future.

While she plans to mentor the team in their next season, she wanted to help set up continued support for FLL teams in her community after she graduates.

To reach additional children, Victoria also held STEM workshops at the Roxana library, where she led hands-on activities and encouraged kids to see how exciting STEM could be, sharing that “STEM is such a huge part of everyday life, and STEM exploration should be encouraged and celebrated.”

Victoria shared that she gained skills and leadership through completing her Girl Scout Gold Award project, as well:

“I have found leadership within myself that I didn’t know was there before,” she said. “If there is something I am passionate about, and I am willing to put in work, I have the power and voice to make something great for my community. I feel so lucky to have had this experience because it truly has taught me so much. I think that the leadership skills that I have gained throughout my project will translate into other parts of my life, including schoolwork and career path.”

Victoria is the daughter of Rachel and Phillip Tarpley. She is a junior at Roxana High School and has been a Girl Scout for 9 years.

The Girl Scout Gold 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 five 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 40½ 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; 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.

Please Visit the GSSI Website www.gsofsi.org and Follow the organization on Facebook

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