

girl scouts 
of tropical florida



Girl Scouts Gold & Silver Awards Ceremony

Sunday, June 9 at 3 p.m.

FIU Wertheim Performing Arts Center

We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts bring their dreams to life as they work together to build a better world. Through programs from coast to coast, Girl Scouts of all backgrounds and abilities can be unapologetically themselves as they discover their strengths and rise to meet new challenges—whether they want to climb to the top of a tree or the top of their class, lace up their boots for a hike or advocate for climate justice, or make their first best friends.

Backed by trusted adult volunteers, mentors, and millions of alums, Girl Scouts lead the way as they find their voices and make changes that affect the issues most important to them.





Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try: To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Highest Awards Task Group

**Janice Coakley
Patricia Cruz
Monica Guevara
Johnette Hardiman
Valentina Niccolini
Lisa Palley
Angelica "Kiki" Zayas**

We thank you for your time, service and
dedication to building girls of courage,
confidence and character!

Ceremony Program

Welcome and Opening

Keynote by Bridgette E. Cram

*Vice President, Academic Affairs: Student Success
Operations and Integrated Planning, FIU, and
a Gold Award Girl Scout*

Recognition of Silver Award Girl Scouts

History of the Gold Awards

Recognition of Gold Award Girl Scouts

Scholarship Presentation

Girl Scout Silver Award

The Girl Scout Silver Award is the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn. It represents service given to others and a commitment to leadership, citizenship and the reach for excellence ... it represents growth, challenge and change.

Troop 2303
Emilie Calixte
Grace Diez
Veronica Franzino
Isabella Whitby

Troop 252
Morgan Jones
Sofia Castillo
Lilly Aring
Juliana Barreras

Troop 552
Gabriela Nodal
Natalia Nodal

Troop 147
Autumn Wallace

Troop 2564
Isabella Benitez

Troop 942
Natalia Grabiel
Alexandra Prado
Isabella Prado

Troop 744
Isabela Vega
Gianna Nicole Rios

Troop 902
Sophy Johnson

Troop 118
Emma Joseph
Elise Raurell
Alicia Fajardo

Troop 739
Malia Boulten
Isabella Martinez

Troop 89
Sky Yeary

Troop 204
Andrea Bolz
Isabella Holcombe

Troop 1832
Alexa Glover

Girl Scout Gold Award

Since 1916, Girl Scouts have been making meaningful, sustainable change in their communities and around the world. The Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn, acknowledges the power behind each recipient's dedication to not only empowering and bettering herself, but also to making the world a better place for others. These young women are courageous leaders and visionary changemakers.



Jenna Abusad – Comp-Kids

Jenna created CompKids, an educational coding program for children ages 10-12. She partnered with Touching Miami With Love and for 8 weeks she taught approximately 15 children coding knowledge and related skills. Throughout the program, the children learned more about how a computer works and what it takes to code. They learned the skills that coding creates, such as analyzing problems, creating solutions, and using teamwork and collaboration to finish a piece of code. Jenna's project is sustained by Touching Miami With Love, who will continue the CompKids program as a part of their overall curriculum in their after-school program. Jenna is a 2024 Silver Knight Nominee and Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker, and plans to attend the University of Florida to major in Health Sciences.

Raquel Arista – The Proper Care and Presentation of YOU!

Confident students do better academically and do not miss out on opportunities that help them grow. Raquel recognized this and so she created a curriculum called The Proper Care and Presentation of You. The curriculum is designed to positively impact students' academic journeys and general wellbeing and teaches students important etiquette and confidence building techniques in an engaging manner. In each of 5 classes, she included lessons about positivity, gratitude, confidence, and etiquette exercises for different situations. She also created a website, presentationofyou.com, that makes her curriculum materials available for download. In order to make the greatest impact, it was very important to Raquel that her message be delivered by other students. She partnered with her school's Breakthrough Miami club to make her class one of the club's volunteer activities during the school year.

Liliana Brown – Microplastics Interpretive Sign

Liliana's love of the outdoors easily translates into a passion for protecting the environment. Being born and raised in Miami helped her have a clear view of the importance of beach cleanups, but she was always frustrated about how difficult it was to collect the smallest pieces. Her conversations with the rangers at Bill Baggs State Park helped her to understand how important it was to collect those small pieces and what she learned from them inspired her project. She partnered with Bill Baggs to install an informational sign that educates visitors about microplastics and encourages people to participate in beach local cleanups. She organized and led cleanups that focused on microplastic collection and worked with Bill Baggs to post microplastic cleanups as an option for volunteer groups to schedule on a regular basis. Liliana is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker and attends the University of Central Florida, majoring in Environmental Engineering.

Caleigh Carter – Flag Etiquette

Caleigh worked with the City of West Miami to design, develop and implement a sustainable US Flag Retirement program. Her goal was to help educate residents about the importance of the US Flag and to establish a method for them to easily and properly retire a Flag that is no longer fit to serve as an emblem of the United States. After meeting with the Mayor and City Council, she received approval to purchase a permanent Flag Retirement Box which has been installed at City Hall. Following the box installation, Caleigh worked with the City's Communications Department to create an educational campaign about the availability and purpose of this new service. The program was presented at the annual State of the City address, information is posted on the City's Instagram page and website, and educational brochures are available in City Hall. The City of West Miami has committed to maintaining this program as a permanent service to residents and the American Legion and Girl Scouts will remain available to retire the flags that are collected. Caleigh is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker.

Julianna Correa – Sharing Golden Smiles and Stories

“Sharing Golden Smiles and Stories” is a literacy program dedicated to teaching individuals with Down Syndrome and cognitive disabilities how to read. Juli worked with 50 students ages 1- 32 years old in one-on-one and small groups sessions. After the sessions, every student was given an audio book that had their parents’ voice auto recorded. The book allows them to practice reading at home, and have a personalized keepsake. Additionally, Juli worked with GiGi’s Playhouse, a Down Syndrome Achievement Center, to install a bookcase containing various recorded audio books and a binder of academic and parental resources that are available for students and parents. She also collaborated with 15 community leaders who each recorded a book to keep at the center. Sustainability will be upheld by Barbara Goleman Senior High School National Honor Society who has agreed to visit GiGi’s Playhouse annually to read with the students. Julianna is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker and attends the University of Alabama. She has been awarded the National Hispanic Recognition Scholarship which provides 100% tuition for 4 years and additional support.

Sofia Delgado – Get Ready, Get Set, Save a Life

Because women are at higher risk of heart disease, Sofia saw the need to teach ways to maintain a healthy heart lifestyle at her all-girls school. She partnered with the American Red Cross to host a series of Hands-Only CPR classes for students and teachers. About 100 participants learned how to assess an emergency, properly perform chest compressions and use an AED. She hosted Healthy Heart presentations that included identifying the warning signs of cardiac issues in women, nutrition tips, and exercises. Sofia also created a service organization called Kits of Love that provides First Aid Kits that are placed in the "Welcome Baskets" at Ronald McDonald House and the ‘Move Out Packages’ at Chapman Partnership. Her project is sustained by the Health Professionals Club at her school. Sofia is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker and plans to attend the University of Florida to major in Public Relations. She has been awarded the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

Penelope Heller – College Access for 7th-9th Grade Students

After talking to many students at her High School, Penelope learned that many had no idea how to navigate their high school career from the beginning or where to go for help. To address this, she worked with a college advising company, Miami Dade County Public Schools leadership and a school board member develop a curriculum focused on providing seventh to ninth grade students with information that will help them with the college admissions process. Her curriculum provides information students can use for motivation and to help simplify the college admissions process. A video she created, called Everyone Can Go to College: A Student's Perspective, was adopted by Miami-Dade County Public Schools and is now a resource available to students, parents and educators. She also created a website for PTSA Leadership to use as a resource, and a presentation to be shared with incoming 9th graders which was adopted by Miami Beach Senior High School. Her project is sustained by the College Club and CAP advisor at her school. Penelope is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker.

Cecelia Ise – The Pollinator Patch Program

A Pollinator Patch is a plot of land that is untouched by herbicides, insecticides, and lawn mowers. Existing plants – many of which provide food for butterfly caterpillars and nectar for butterflies and other pollinators – are allowed to grow as Nature intended. The Patch eventually becomes an area full of biodiverse flora and fauna. Through a series of presentations and workshops at community events, Cecelia's hands-on program activities inform participants about the importance of native plants and pollinators and how to create and sustain a pollinator patch. Participants learn how to make a Pollinator Patch in their yard or work with their local government to add Pollinator Patches to public spaces. She partnered with several organizations including Village of Biscayne Park, Barry University, and more to create pollinator patches on their property. Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida now also has a pollinator patch at Camp Mahachie. Cecelia also partnered with Bounty for Beauty to include a page on their website promoting the pollinator patch program. Each pollinator patch features an educational sign Cecelia created with a QR code leading to the webpage so visitors to the patch can easily learn more.

Luciana Lee – Break the Chain

According to dosomething.org, around 33% of adolescents in the US report having been victims of sexual, physical, verbal or emotional dating abuse. A recent news story inspired Luciana to learn more about why so many feel it is OK to stay in a relationship where they don't feel safe. She saw an opportunity to educate her peers on dating violence prevention and how to identify signs of an abusive relationship. She became a Youth Leader for OneLove Foundation, a national non-profit organization that aims to end relationship abuse and developed branding materials, a social media presence, and a toolkit to be shared with schools in her community. She hosted interactive workshops at her school, at which students learned how to approach dangerous, real-world situations and identify early signs of unhealthy relationships. She created Break the Chain, an official club at her school that will ensure that her program can continue its mission in the future. Luciana also reached out and introduced her project to Mayor Daniella Levin-Cava and is now currently working with members of the Mayor's team to find ways in which Break the Chain can be included in other city efforts addressing Teen Dating Violence. Luciana is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker.

Amanda Leiva – Goals for Girls

Goals for Girls aims to empower young female athletes from migrant communities by providing them with access to quality training, exposure to role models, and opportunities for personal and athletic development both on and off the field. Financial constraints hinder the Immokalee Soccer Pit Cobras club from access to proper training equipment, transportation to tournaments, and exposure to higher-level competition and female role models. To tackle these challenges, Amanda created Goals for Girls. This program involved providing training sessions and organizing guest speakers to inspire the girls and impart valuable life skills such as hard work, commitment, goal setting, and leadership. To ensure sustainability, Amanda plans to establish an Instagram account and hold periodic in-person sessions in Immokalee or Miami to stay connected with the girls.

Gianna Marando – Nature Scavenger Hunt at The Enchanted Forest

There was never a time when Gianna was not involved in The Enchanted Forest Park in North Miami. She wanted to share her love of this park with others, so she created a fun, interactive scavenger hunt for kids. Metal signs scattered around the park have QR codes directing participants to a website she created that includes age-appropriate activities. She also spearheaded several educational campaigns including encouraging schools to bring students on field trips to the park to learn about invasive plants. Her Enchanted Forest projects have reached hundreds of people through social media, personal appearances/presentations, and the website. Through her efforts, a Junior Friends of the Park board has been established and will serve as a liaison between schools/youth groups and the park and continue other projects at the park. Gianna is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker and plans to attend Florida State University to major in Marketing.

Amelia McKay – plastic smART: small changes, big impacts

Amelia began plastic smART during her sophomore year of high school, but its inspiration came from a Girl Scout take-action project she worked on in middle school. plastic smART is a multi-faceted project that focuses on the global marine debris crisis and includes a curriculum she created for K-12 students that features a beach cleanup, the creation of an ephemeral art project, and action steps for helping reduce the amount of plastic in the oceans. In partnership with Miami EcoAdventures, plastic smART is a field trip option at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Nature Center. She also partnered with Royal Caribbean and with their help, plastic smART is translated into Creole and French to be used with students in Haiti. Additionally, Amelia has created a website and Instagram account to further publicize her project and to highlight other creators speaking out about marine pollution, and an art installation made from marine debris that also acts as a plastic collection bin. Amelia is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker.

Delaney Novak – Senior Technology

Delaney instituted a series of workshops at The Palace that teaches senior citizens how to navigate their smart devices and use them without requiring assistance. Her audience learned how to send a text, take a picture or video and send it, call someone, video call someone, make appointments in the calendar app, make a contact on a phone and more. To ensure they can remember what they learned at the workshops, she created laminated sheets that include step by step instructions, including photos of every skill. The Palace will continue the workshops in the future and make the laminated tip sheets available to anyone who needs a refresher. Delaney is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker.

Finn Ogberg – Trans Name Changes

Finn experienced firsthand the struggle the trans community in Florida faces, and they knew that changing the legislature was too wide a scope to tackle with this project. So they focused on the most core part of anyone's identity, your name. They wanted to make sure that people choosing to go through this process would have every advantage they could, starting with an awareness of the resources out there to help them. Finn created a resource hub to make changing your name legally in Florida more accessible. They worked with TransSocial, a South Florida non-profit, who helped them put their research into use by formatting and hosting a step by step guide to the whole process on their website. In the course of completing their project, Finn saw that the transgender community is supportive, and resilient. They never had someone tell them that it was unimportant in the grand scheme of what they fight for; but instead, they were offered help time and time again. Finn is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker and plans to attend Sarah Lawrence College and major in Theater Arts.

Laura Perez – Pet Abandonment: Educating the Community

The Pet Abandonment project aims to address the issues of animal welfare and pet abandonment. After visiting Aguacate Animal Sanctuary, Laura sought to raise awareness about the consequences of abandoning pets and promote responsible pet ownership to prevent such occurrences in the future. Her project increases public awareness about the root causes of pet abandonment by sharing stories and information about abandoned animals and their experiences. She provided education on the responsibilities of pet ownership and the impact of owners' decisions on their pets' lives. Aguacate Animal Sanctuary has agreed to continue these educational events bimonthly.

Gabriela Prieto – Drumming Therapy

Gabriela partnered with the Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired to offer drumming classes to children in 6th – 12th grade. She wanted to help improve the self-esteem and general happiness of children with visual disabilities, so she chose to address these issues through drumming. Drumming has been recognized to increase and support communication skills, motor skills, social skills, emotional needs, and self-esteem. Drumming can also increase happiness as it releases endorphins and alpha waves in the brain, which are generally associated with feelings of well-being and prosperity. She created a drumming curriculum, which is implemented in the music program in the Lighthouse for the Blind and facilitated the first 10 classes. Additionally, she donated bucket drums, drumsticks and stickers so all children can have the opportunity to participate in the drumming classes at once. Gabriela is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker.

Vittoria Santana – The Million Dollar Passage

Vittoria's mom instilled in her the value of saving money and she saw a need among her peers to learn more about saving and investing. Working with several advisors she created a curriculum designed to educate high school students on the importance of financial literacy. She reached over 100 students with her program, which provided them with information on the basics of investing and a number of resources that they can use to open up accounts and dive deeper into the world of investing. It was very important to Vittoria that her curriculum be delivered by a peer so she collaborated with her math teacher who will incorporate the curriculum in the classroom and choose a student each year to present the lesson. Vittoria is a Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida Changemaker and will be attending Florida State University majoring in Finance.

Alexa Tapanes – Hopeful Beginnings

As she helped her grandparents at their “bodega,” Alexa frequently heard the concerns of their immigrant patrons on helping their children establish new roots in this country. The initiative “Hopeful Beginnings,” came about to serve this population of students in their desire to acclimate and excel as successful members of our society. The project targets both elementary and high school students through two components. The first is a self-published bilingual children's book, “A Hopeful Beginning,” aimed at providing school-aged children with a view into what life is like arriving in Florida. The second is the Hopeful Beginnings YouTube channel featuring grade specific videos called “Beginnings for Success Freshman, Sophomore Junior and Senior editions, to help high school students maximize their involvement potential and guide them through the complex college preparation and application process. Students can learn how to write a resume, request a letter of recommendation, and click on links to free resources to prepare for college entrance exams. The Spanish club at her school will provide copies of the book as needed and maintain the YouTube channel in the future. Alexa will be attending the University of Florida majoring in Finance.

Amanda Werner – Worth Beyond Weight

Recognizing the pervasive issue of diet culture and disordered eating in our society, and having experienced it herself, Amanda set out to address the issues with a threefold approach. Her goals were to educate adolescents on diet culture and its influences on body image, and weight discrimination; affect change by identifying sustainable pathways of action towards bodily acceptance; and to form a supportive community for those in recovery. She created a curriculum for a workshop series which was presented to high school students in five sessions. She also created a website worthbeyondweight.org and an Instagram page to further her reach and impact. The Wolves Wellness club at her school has agreed to continue this curriculum around the time of Eating Disorder Awareness Week and the website and Instagram page will provide a permanent space for resources.

Grace Westin – Bike Safety Outreach Program

Grace comes from a family of cyclists. Her parents met through their love of cycling, and she grew up with the click of the gears. Understanding there is a lack of education regarding safe bicycling practices, she developed her project to address several issues. She held summer camp workshops for children where she presented information on bicycle safety, bicycle parts and maintenance, and the importance of bicycle helmets. She was able to provide bicycle helmets for workshop participants and, because she is certified in bicycle helmet fitting, she provided that service as well. Grace also wanted to improve community bicycle maintenance facilities, so she donated a bicycle repair station to the village of Biscayne Park, home to a popular park that is used by residents of all ages. She partnered with Miami-Dade County Bike305 to ensure the summer camps have connectin with a certified Bike Helmet fitter who can provide training. The summer camps were also provided with the contact information for the Miami-Dade County Bike305 Coordinator, who is a certified bicycle helmet fitting trainer and materials for the bike safety and bike maintenance presentation are all available on the University of Miami BikeSafe website.

Girl Scout Scholarships

Jackson Health System Gold Award Scholarship
*presented by Isa Nunez, Vice President, Facilities
Design & Construction, Jackson Health System*

José Milton Foundation Advancing Women in
STEM Gold Award Scholarship
*presented by Ana VeigaMilton, President,
José Milton Foundation*

Nicklaus Children's Health System
Gold Award Scholarship
*presented by Dawn Javersack, Senior Vice President
and CFO, Nicklaus Children's Health System*

Scholarships awarded by:



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UHealth Jackson Urgent Care*

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The Charles N. & Eleanor Knight Leigh Foundation
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Jennifer McCafferty-Fernandez
Commissioner Anthony Rodriguez
TD Bank
University of Miami
United Way
Gloria Velazquez
Angelica "Kiki" Zayas*



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