



# The Highest Rewards

By Angela Zuniga-Meyer, Parishioner & Seek Christ Editor

The highest rewards of faith are earned by giving of yourself to others. Learning to give of yourself is an internal reflection of community needs turned into action. How does one decide to engage in inspiring action? Young women need to look no further than Girl Scouts to support their vision for change. The Girl Scout Higher Award program challenges young women to plan, educate, and inspire change in their world.

The Highest Awards in Girl Scouting are the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. These awards give young women the framework to find a way to transform their community. Girl Scouts within our St. Dominic community are earning these highest awards by creating sustainable change within our archdiocese, our local community, and beyond.

Emma Pittman, parishioner, Mass lector, forensic coach, and Girl Scout, created a plan for change with her Gold Award Project: **Not An Adjective**.

*Not An Adjective's* main focus was speaking to middle school students in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee about mental health; a topic many are hesitant to address. Initially, she reached students through online videos and presentations. The most successful part

of her project, however, were the presentations to eight classes in three schools, reaching approximately 250 students. Her program helped them learn what to do if they had concerns about their own mental health, as well as how to help a friend who may be in need. Through direct interaction with the students, her goal was to persuade even just one person to receive help or reach out to a friend.

Emma's lesson plans directly engaged

Award projects submitted to Girl Scouts of Southeast Wisconsin this year.

Another young woman of courage, confidence and character, who is making the world a better place, is parishioner, Lifelong Formation Nursery Assistant, and Girl Scout, Isabel Zuniga-Meyer. She previously earned her Bronze Award in 5th grade for her troop project *Blankets, Books and Bears* for the Ronald McDonald House. Now this remarkable Girl Scout is a Silver Award

Recipient with her project: **Fidget Friend**.

"*Fidget Friend* is a tool I created with many distraction pieces that individuals can touch for input, and help them relax. This can help with anxiety or focus, so that children can express their feelings by using this board. It will encourage them to cool down while experiencing



Emma Pittman, St. Dominic Catholic School alumnus presenting her "Not an Adjective" project at our parish school.

students in interactive activities and allowed for conversations to be carried on by the teachers, students, and parents, after she left the classroom.

Emma previously earned the Bronze and Silver Award before she attained her goal of earning the Gold Award. This St. Dominic graduate's Gold Award was so exceptional that it earned her the honor of *Girl Scout Young Woman of Distinction*. This is an additional honor given to one of the most inspiring Gold

mental stressors." *Fidget Friend* helps advocate for Mental Health Awareness by helping those who struggle, and inform those who do not understand, why distraction tools are needed.

Isabel researched types of fidget tools and decided what would work best. She designed *Fidget Friend* with drawings and measurements. She hand-picked wood and used power tools to cut and shape the board, then sanded and lacquered the board to a smooth finish. Isabel repurposed old parts and visited

stores to create the right fidget tools for the board.

“My original project was to make one *Fidget Friend*. However, when I started to show my project at events, I got requests for additional boards. The *Fidget Friend* boards are now permanent additions to my middle school, a Children’s Hospital therapy center, and a Catholic school guidance classroom. There are also pin posts showing pictures of the product, along with simple do it yourself instructions.”

These St. Dominic Girl Scouts, along with many before them, honorably gave of themselves to our community. They have both witnessed at St. Dominic, and implemented, a spirit of giving through action. Our Girl Scouts take the lead in building networks of support and



Isabel Zuniga-Meyer shows her Silver Award Project, “the Fidget Friend.”

implementing lasting solutions to issues. Their inspiration will help bring

change and help lead others to give of themselves.

The Girl Scout Higher Award program honored these young women in 2018 for their ability to truly make the world a better place.

A traditional Girl Scout song has the lyrics, “Make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold. A circle is round it has no end, that’s how long I want to be your friend.” The visionary leadership of our St. Dominic Girl Scout Highest award recipients deepens the melody’s meaning, as Silver and Gold paves not only lifelong friendships, but lasting change through connections, leadership, and action that encompasses generations.



## Going for Girl Scout Gold

The Gold Award is the Highest Award in Girl Scouts and one of the most prestigious awards in the world for young women. Since 1916 generations of girls have transformed the world by addressing community needs through a highest award project. This prestigious award can be earned by Girl Scout young women in grades 9-12 who complete a rigorous 7 step process. Young women earning the Gold Award join an elite group of leaders with this top-tier credential, and can enter the military one rank higher. The Girl Scout Highest Award program also gives younger scouts a framework to enact change with the opportunity to earn highest ranks for their level. The Silver award is earned by Girl Scout Cadettes in grades 6-8 and the Bronze for Juniors in grades 4-5. Both Silver and Bronze awards start our younger Girl Scouts on the path to sustainable change and inspire them to go for the Gold!