girl scouts of montana and wyoming

2025 – 2026 Gold Award Project Summaries

A**ubrey M.** of Circle, MT identified a need to improve an outdoor space in her community so it could be a more functional stop for local families and travelers. The project focused on children's needs, improvement of physical and mental health and increasing outdoor community engagement. She organized volunteers and coordinated the project logistics so the finished space is welcoming to all. She installed a covered picnic shelter, picnic tables and playground equipment. Aubrey has received positive feedback from her community about the impact the new space has made.

Brooke W. of Wilson, WY focused on increasing access to healthy food and providing students with hands-on education about growing produce. Jackson Hole has a harsh climate with a short growing season and Brooke addressed this barrier by building a greenhouse at Wilson Elementary School. The greenhouse is designed to provide an ongoing educational resource for staff and students where they can learn about gardening, growing healthy food and how to prepare healthy snacks with the produce they grow. Brooke's partnership with Mountain Roots Education will ensure its sustainability beyond her involvement. The surveys Brooke conducted conveyed that the students were excited to be in the greenhouse and learn about the plants they were growing.

Carly L. of Helena, MT addressed the disconnect between children and the origins of their food. Carly organized and led an agricultural event called AG Days, featuring hands-on learning experiences for nearly 200 students K-5 to increase their understanding of agriculture, food production, and local food systems. Students engaged in activities like making ice cream, dough boys and cheese, leatherwork which helped make the concepts of livestock, dairy and grains more personal and meaningful. To ensure long-term impact, Carly developed age-appropriate educational workbooks and lesson plans teachers can continue to use in the classroom.

Chloe C. of Havre, MT focused on mental health and suicide awareness particularly among youth, with an emphasis on promoting the 988 Suicide and Crisis help line. Chloe designed and created mental health themed bookmarks featuring 988 information; the bookmarks were distributed through school and public libraries, a medical center, VA clinic, a high school, and a university. Chloe developed a presentation about 988 and suicide awareness for youth and community groups where she gathered feedback to assess what participants learned.

Kseniya K. of Gillette, WY identified a gap at the Gillette Abuse Refuge Foundation. While caregivers received information about the shelter, there were few age-appropriate resources for children. She created two illustrated "You Are Safe Here" books, one for ages 3-7 and another for ages 8-12, to introduce children to the shelter, explain what to expect, and help them feel welcomed, supported, and safe. She developed a pre and post observational checklist to measure the children's comfort, safety, and engagement. The books were also made available on the agency's website to further her reach with domestic violence providers.

Taylor C. of Missoula, MT addressed the environmental impact of discarded tennis balls. As a tennis player, Taylor observed tennis balls being discarded regularly and learned that approximately 125 million tennis balls are thrown away each year making tennis the 5th polluting sport. Missoula did not have a public system for recycling or repurposing used tennis balls so she partnered with Missoula Parks and Recreation to develop a sustainable system to collect tennis balls at tennis courts and transfer them to local dog parks. Excess balls can also be distributed to physical therapy centers, nursing homes, and rehabilitation facilities. Taylor has already measured the success of her project with one tennis court collection receptacle consistently holding more than 200 balls. The strong community response and continued involvement of Parks and Recreation gives the project a solid foundation to continue beyond Taylor's involvement.

Teah V. of Wilsall, MT recognized that youth have limited access to practical training to develop the skills in livestock care and showmanship which lead to frustration, unsafe practices and youth dropping out of livestock programs like 4-H and FFA. Teah developed a hands-on educational program to teach youth beef livestock care, safety and showmanship and then expanded her program from Montana to Nevada to increase access to her program. Participants showed measurable improvement in skills and confidence and over 70% went on to compete in livestock shows and placed successfully. The project created a replicable model with plans for future camps beyond Teah's involvement.