

## **New Mexico Girl Scout Earns Highest Honor for Engineering a Solar-Powered Helicopter Pad for Healthcare Access**

*Los Alamos' Natalie Aulwes has been honored as a National Gold Award Girl Scout, earning recognition as one of ten in the country for powering sustainable change.*

October 6, 2020

Albuquerque, New Mexico -- Ahead of the International Day of the Girl on October 11, Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails announced that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) named Natalie Aulwes a 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scout—one of ten teen activists who have shown extraordinary leadership and created change with sustainable impact on pressing issues Americans face today. By tackling problems such as healthcare access and education, food insecurity, campus sexual assault, menstrual equity, distracted driving, etc. Natalie and her fellow National Gold Award Girl Scouts have found ambitious ways to lead the charge and transform the world. And Gold Award Girl Scouts not only create immediate positive change, but they make a sustainable impact that will continue to benefit others for years to come.

The world has experienced significant change this year, and Girl Scouts are continuing to transform their communities in thoughtful, innovative ways. Natalie, a National Ski Patroller with Rocky Mountain Division, identified a need for quicker, more efficient health care access on the hill she patrolled. She collaborated with local air medical services to engineer a new solar-powered helicopter pad that delivers injured people directly from injury to air ambulance medical services. Also, Natalie's recognition of a shortage of girls pursuing STEM education inspired her to offer an all-girl engineering workshop to demonstrate concepts like circuitry, drafting, and 3D computer-assisted design to encourage STEM mentorship with younger girls. To sustain her training, Natalie created a tutorial of basic writing techniques for the solar-powered landing zone to a website for girls

to access engineering demonstrations. Natalie's confident leadership abilities took this project from conception to realization, motivating and mentoring her community along the way. As our country looks to today's youth as tomorrow's leaders, Gold Award Girl Scouts continue to lead the change they want to see in the world.

"Building the helicopter pad made me recognize just how far my engineering ideas could go. Knowing that my helipad can save lives and that people wanted to patent my design encourages me to continue to pursue my ideas," said National Gold Award Girl Scout, Natalie Aulwes. "My Gold Award project also made me realize that many girls are curious about STEM and that a female mentor's encouragement can alter their perception! It warmed my heart to see that I could make girls feel as excited about science as I am." Read more about Natalie's project [here](#).

"We are immensely proud of the 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scouts! They are addressing issues that impact their community and matter to them," said interim GSUSA CEO Judith Batty. "To earn the Gold Award, Girl Scouts must identify the source of a problem, develop a sustainable solution, and engage their communities in bringing about that solution. These ten remarkable girls are proof that Girl Scouts gives girls the tools to harness their inner power and make a meaningful difference in the world. In this difficult year and always, Girl Scouts are our hope for the future."

On October 10, girls are invited to attend the [Girl Scouts Change the World virtual celebration](#) ahead of International Day of the Girl to meet the ten 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scouts as they share their projects to inspire a new generation to step up in unique ways and transform the world around them. The event is powered by technology sponsor Microsoft. It is specially designed for Girl Scouts in grades 4-12 but is open to caregivers, volunteers, and girls who want to get inspired.

"Microsoft believes in inspiring girls to become the next generation of innovators and leaders," said Olga Lymberis, Sr. Director, Community, Small Business, Education and Cloud Marketing, Microsoft. "For the second year, we are sponsoring the National Gold Award Girl Scout celebration because we know that closing the gender gap in fields like STEM requires tapping into girls' creativity, providing encouragement, and highlighting real-world role models like these Gold Award Girl Scouts. By highlighting girls' incredible achievements, Microsoft is continuing its efforts to promote diversity, inclusion and gender equality now and in the future."

Thousands of Girl Scouts earn the Gold Award each year, the highest achievement a Girl Scout in high school can earn for tackling an issue that is dear to her and driving lasting change in her community and beyond. Annually, GSUSA recognizes ten of these girls as National Gold Award Girl Scouts for completing projects that exemplify strong leadership and sustainable impact. Earning the Gold Award opens doors to scholarships, preferred admission tracks for college, and amazing career opportunities—as well as skills that set girls up for success, like strategic thinking, communication, collaboration, problem solving, and time management.

This year, National Gold Award Girl Scout nominations underwent a rigorous multi-round review process, with finalist applications reviewed by a panel of previous National Gold Award Girl Scouts, leaders from a range of professional fields, GSUSA staff, Girl Scouts' national volunteer partners, and representatives from the Kappa Delta Foundation and Arconic Foundation. The 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scouts will receive a combined \$100,000 in college scholarships from Susan Bulkeley Butler, founder of a women's leadership development organization and a former member of the Girl Scouts of the USA Board of Directors. The Kappa Delta Foundation and Arconic Foundation also each generously contributed \$50,000 in college scholarships.

Girl Scouts—like these incredible young women—make the world a better place every day and will continue to act as bold advocates for a brighter future. To see how you can get involved and make a difference as a member or volunteer, visit [nmgirlscouts.org](https://nmgirlscouts.org).