

Gold Award: From Community Service to Take Action!

Congratulations on making the decision to earn your GOLD AWARD! We're so excited about all the ways you'll change the world through this project and then for the rest of your life. We know sometimes the difference between community service projects and Take Action projects is difficult to understand. This guide will support you as you earn the highest award in Girl Scouting.

Community Service	Take Action	Say What?
Makes the community better for RIGHT NOW.	Makes the community better LONG-TERM.	We know forever is a long time, so while we would love to actually decimate poverty or hunger for the rest of time, we don't expect that from anyone. At this level, we expect you to be thinking in terms of decades, though!
Addresses an immediate need.	Addresses either an immediate need or a long-standing need.	Immediate – a problem today and tomorrow, but probably not in a year. Long-standing – a problem that's been around for a while and will still be around for a long time if someone doesn't work at fixing it.
Solves problem FOR the community.	Solves problem WITH the community.	Doing something WITH the community means you don't assume you have all the answers. Instead, you work with experts and community members to find out how they would solve the problem, what changes they think are necessary, and you make them part of the solution.
Might be measurable, might not be.	ALWAYS measurable!	You'll have hard data to back up your assertion that you've done something about the root cause of your issue.
Doesn't address root cause.	Addresses root cause of issue.	Find the root cause of an issue by asking "why," and then keep asking until you've discovered your tree's roots.

Want an example?

Issue	Community Service	Take Action	Result
Litter on a local beach.	Girl Scout gathers a group of community volunteers together for a beach clean-up day.	<p>Root cause: People don't understand the negative effects of leaving trash on the beach and they don't have enough alternative options.</p> <p>Meg works with a local community organizer and a local climate advocate as well as the local chapter of the Sierra Club to set up monthly beach clean-up days. Her team creates a social media campaign that works across Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to educate the community about the dangers of pollution to the immediate community and the wider marine ecosystem. Campaign challenges beach goers to implement Leave No Trace at the beach. Meg lobbies the city council to install permanent trash cans and recycling bins along the boardwalk and on the beach. She works with local businesses to provide gloves, trash bags and trash pickers in their stores to residents or visitors who want to pick up litter, with a promotion that anyone who brings in a full bag of litter from the beach receives free or discounted products in each participating business.</p> <p>Participating businesses also post fun fact posters Meg created and printed (on recycled materials) giving customers reasons that keeping the beach clean is important. These posters are also mounted on each set of trash/recycling bins. Sierra Club agrees to update posters annually and maintain partnerships with businesses.</p>	Sustainability in this example is three pronged: permanent trash and recycling bins encourage visitors to clean up after themselves, monthly clean up days and partnership with local businesses ensure that any trash that is left behind is taken care of regularly, and fact sheets/social media campaign continue to educate residents and visitors indefinitely.

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Here's another example.

Issue	Community Service	Take Action	Result
<p>Not enough dessert at the after school child care program.</p>	<p>Girl Scout hosts baking day with team and delivers baked goods to after school program.</p>	<p>Root Causes: Dietary restrictions/allergies, and barriers to accessing ingredients. Meg creates a team including a pastry chef from a local community college program, a graphic designer, and a local food security advocate. Team works to create and host in-person workshops about dietary restrictions as well as recording each workshop and making them available on websites of community college, food security advocate and local community groups. Meg researches both issues and works with graphic designer to create downloadable recipe books, one for common dietary restrictions and one for low-cost recipes. Meg maps community grocery stores and convenience stores and creates a list of where to find common ingredients for the lowest prices as well as hyper-local options for those without transportation. Meg prints five copies of each cookbook and donates them to local library system, which also agrees to promote the workshops and co-host future no-cost learning workshops for residents with the food security advocate. Meg works with food security advocate to explain the importance of occasional desserts to food-secure mindsets for children, and campaigns for schools to include desserts for students on the free lunch program once a month, and to make desserts available to other students on the same schedule so no one feels left out or on display — everyone enjoys dessert together. Finally, Meg works with her team to implement quarterly bake sales at library, run by community college students as part of their pastry classes and advised by pastry chef and food security advocate. Baked goods will be prepared in the community college kitchen to ensure no cross contamination occurs and treats are safe for everyone. Bake sale will work on a buy one, give one model, with give one donations going to the after school child care program. This ensures a steady supply of treats for the program This ensures a treat for anyone regardless of income. Any proceeds will go toward purchasing supplies for the next quarter's bake sale.</p>	<p>In this project, sustainability is ensured through the long-term availability of the recorded workshops, the downloadable recipe books, future workshops hosted by Meg's team, quarterly bake sales at the library, and finally, what we hope is a permanent change in the way the local schools serve dessert.</p>