

Mary Katherine Futrell Earns Girl Scouts' Highest Honor for Developing a Public Awareness Campaign to Help Coral Reefs

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Dallas, TX —In preparation for International Day of the Girl on October 11, Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas announced that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) named Mary Katherine Futrell a 2019 National Gold Award Girl Scout—one of ten teen activists and change-makers who created innovative and sustainable solutions for today's most pressing issues and is being honored with the organization's highest distinction. While people worldwide are feeling the effects of urgent local, national, and global challenges, including environmental conservation, LGBTQ representation, mental health, food deserts, and ocean pollution, Mary Katherine and her fellow National Gold Award Girl Scouts found ambitious ways to lead the charge and transform the world.

Fueled by passion, persistence, and a resistance to accept the status quo, the National Gold Award Girl Scouts were selected from an impressive pool of this year's Gold Award Girl Scouts nationwide for their extraordinary leadership and ability to develop lasting solutions—and achieve remarkable results—for critical issues in their communities and beyond. Girl Scouts who earn the Gold Award not only change the world for the better, they change it for good.

For her Gold Award project, Mary Katherine, a senior at Bishop Lynch High School, created a public awareness campaign in partnership with NOAA and the National Park service. Called Project ReefLove, the initiative is dedicated to promoting awareness about the impact of sunscreens on coral reefs and reef friendly-alternatives for sun protection. Mary Katherine and her team were able to educate more than 11,000 people in more than 20 different countries.

“We are thrilled that one of this year's National Gold Award Girl Scouts is from North Texas. Mary Katherine is a fantastic example of the tangible impact that Girl Scouts are making in their communities and beyond, said Jennifer Bartkowski, CEO of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. “This year we have had 150 girls complete their Gold Award projects. The skills the Girl Scouts learn while developing and implementing their Gold Award are skills that they will use for years to come.”

National Gold Award Girl Scout nominations underwent a rigorous multi-round review process. Finalist applications were reviewed by a panel of previous National Gold Award Girl Scouts, leaders from a diverse array of fields, GSUSA staff, National Volunteer partners, and representatives from the Kappa Delta Foundation and Arconic Foundation. This year's 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 for the 2019 cohort.

Girl Scouts—like these young women—make the world a better place every day and will continue to defy expectations and 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 gsnetx.org/joinGS.

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Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas

Girl Scouts is building a pipeline of strong, confident girls. As the expert in how girls learn, Girl Scouts provides relevant programming that focuses on life skills, STEM, entrepreneurship and the outdoors – helping girls develop the confidence to know they can do anything they put their minds to. Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas serves more than 25,000 girls and 12,000 adult volunteers across 32 counties. In 2018, GSNETX opened the STEM Center of Excellence, a 92-acre state-of-the-art camp just outside Dallas where girls can experience programs in astronomy, robotics, coding, computer science and more. GSNETX was recognized as a 2018 Tech Titan Technology Advocate Finalist, 2017 Million Women Mentors Stand Up for STEM Award and 2016 CNM Connect Nonprofit of the Year. Learn more at gsnetx.org or call 972-349-2400.