



Girl Scout Humanitarian



Katelyn Graham

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School

Gold Award Project: *Ableism Everyday*

For her Gold Award, Katelyn wrote and illustrated a children's book showing an autistic main character making a friend. As a woman born with Autism-Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Katelyn had a difficult time making friends as a child. ASD is often misrepresented in the media, especially when it comes to women. Women with ASD are severely underdiagnosed because of misconceptions pushed by unfair stereotypes. With this book, Katelyn wished to help children, specifically young girls, in her area understand a bit more about living a life with autism.

Girl Scouts was one of the first places where Katelyn felt she could safely have friends. After a total of three troops, she found one where she felt appreciated by her peers. The leadership and responsibility she learned during her time in Girl Scouts cannot be replaced. Some of her favorite activities were summer camping and helping teach younger girls new skills.

Katelyn has always had a love for literature. During her high school years, she won a total of twelve awards for various works. She was also the president of her school's National English Honors Society. While she was president, she helped establish the school's first library system along with two separate tutoring services.

Katelyn would like to thank the women who have gotten her to this point. Especially her mom and sisters, her Girl Scout troop, its leaders, and her high school principal. She would also like to thank Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania for awarding her this distinct honor. Currently, Katelyn is working towards a degree in English. She hopes to one day earn a master of library sciences and work in an archival collection.