

## 231 Girl Scouts earn organization's highest award

By Brian Day, Staff Writer

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Girl Scouts file into the auditorium and receive flowers as the Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA) honored 231 young women at the Annual GSGLA Gold Award Ceremony at the Pasadena Convention Center, Sunday, June 13, 2010. These Girl Scouts, from communities in the greater Los Angeles area, have earned the prestigious national Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor in Girl Scouting. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Eric Reed)

PASADENA - More than 200 girls from the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley areas were recognized by the Girl Scouts of America on Sunday for earning the organization's highest honor.

The Gold Award was given to 231 Girl Scouts for completing a seven-stage process, capped by a community service project that demands at least 65 hours of work from each Scout.

Speaking at a ceremony at a ceremony at the Pasadena Convention Center, Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Board of Directors Chairwoman Betsey Brewer told the girls they should be proud of themselves for their accomplishments.

"This is only the beginning of what you will do in your lives," she said. "You're an inspiration to all of us, and to future generations of Girl Scouts."

A crowd of hundreds stood for an ovation when Girl Scout officials finished reading the names of the Gold Award recipients.

For Jennifer Hiraga, 19, of Monterey Park, a Scout for 14 years, Sunday's award ceremony was a milestone.

"I've been in Girl Scouts since kindergarten," she said. "It really meant a lot to me to earn the Gold Award."

For her community service project, Hiraga interviewed women who have been through the program at the Walter Hoving Home in Pasadena, a home to help women who have struggled with problems like drug addiction and alcoholism.

With the information, she compiled a booklet about the program to give to potential clients.

Hiraga said not only did she feel like she made a difference through her project, but she said it also taught her valuable lessons about leadership.

She added that she treasures her years in the Girl Scouts for the friendships and knowledge she's gained.

"I think every girl should be in the Girl Scouts at some point in their lives," Hiraga said.

Naomi Rosenkranz, 16, of Pasadena, and Teagan Blain-Rozgay, 17, of Eagle Rock, teamed up on their community service project - a bilingual children's book.

The pair made a book titled "Leo the Lion Tries New Things," which Blain-Rozgay authored and Rosenkranz illustrated.

They printed the book in English and Spanish, recorded bilingual audio CDs of the book and distributed them to 10 centers operated by the nonprofit organization Para Los Niños in the Los Angeles area.

Rosenkranz said she also spent time reading to children at the centers.

"It was special just to see the kids enjoying it," she said of the project. "It was a lot of work, but it was worth it, because I'm really happy we got to help those kids."

The event was emceed by television reporter Lisa Sigell of KCBS 2 and KCAL9.

A keynote speech was given by entrepreneur, former model and reality television star Alexis Jones.

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