

High school Girl Scouts earn coveted Gold Award

By [Thomas Grillo](#) | January 7, 2018



Sophia Litle is a Girl Scout working on her Gold Award by cataloging the library's antiques. Here she is in the stacks that hold Lynn's history and more. (Owen O'Rourke)

LYNN — Sophia Litle is a history buff who has taken on the challenge of cataloguing dozens of the library's forgotten artifacts.

Meredith McIntosh is working on a tool kit for elders so they'll have all their essential documents in one place to prepare families for end of life.

These high school Girl Scouts may be on different missions, but they have one thing in common. They are seeking the group's highest achievement: the Girl Scout Gold Award. Often compared to the Boy Scouts' Eagle Scout, the prize recognizes teens who demonstrate leadership through projects that impact their communities and beyond. It's an accomplishment scouts can add to their résumés, and enhance college admission and employment.



Meredith McIntosh is a 17-year-old girl scout who is trying to earn a Gold Award for creating a Tool Kit for elders. (Spenser Hasak)

Litle and McIntosh, both 17, are among 156 girls in the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts pursuing the designation this year and the only two from Lynn.

Of the 32,000 Girl Scouts in the region, only 800 are in grades 11-12.

“A lot of people say they can’t believe that I’m almost 18 and I’m still a Girl Scout,” said Litle. “I don’t belong to a troop and I don’t sell cookies, but I like it because it’s an independent study that allows me to do something to benefit Lynn.”

The Swampscott High School senior, who lives in Lynn, sought the advice of then-Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy on what task she should pursue.

The mayor mentioned a handful of projects, such as working with elementary school students. But Litle was lured by the prospect of completing a catalog of antiques from the library that was started years ago but never completed.

“When the mayor introduced me to the idea, I instantly fell in love with it,” she said. “History is my favorite topic and I love that we could create a display of items the public never sees.”

Kennedy said the project is a perfect fit for Litle’s talents.

“She loves history and there’s a treasure trove of articles in the library that need cataloguing and care,” she said.

For McIntosh, being a teenage Girl Scout makes perfect sense. Her mom is the troop leader, and the junior at Peabody’s Bishop Fenwick High School has been with the Scouts since pre-school.

“Even though I’ve changed schools, it’s helped keep these friendships alive,” she said.

McIntosh chose a project that would benefit elders after she watched as her parents helped her grandparents make plans for after their death.

“My grandparents didn’t have all the information they needed in one place and it happens to lots of families who lack a will or don’t know their wishes,” said McIntosh.

The 62-page kit, which she hopes to have online at the completion of the project next spring, includes information about bank accounts, tax returns, insurance policies, funeral arrangements and more.

“It will be a one-stop shop for families who need to know where all the important information is kept,” she said.

It’s not a replacement for a will, but a repository of all the personal data families require when there’s a death.

“I’ve been working on it for nearly a year and I hope to have it done in March,” McIntosh said. “I think it will benefit lots of families who will have one less stress when their loved one dies.”