



Girl Scout Donates Over 500 Books for NICU Library
Adriana Ferraro with project, "Bonding Through Books."

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Adriana Ferraro, a Thousand Oaks Girl Scout, is a recent graduate from Chaminade College Preparatory School. With a strong love for both children and reading, she sought to combine both with her Gold Award project, Bonding Through Books. Adriana reached out to St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard with the goal to create a NICU library so that mothers could read to their children at the hospital.

The underlying issue Adriana sought to address with her project was the lack of literacy in the United States. "My project seeks to help with parental bonding, illiteracy challenges, and verbalization with young children. This is a world-wide issue because 17% of the world is illiterate," she says. According to the Literacy Foundation, the root cause of illiteracy is having parents who have had little schooling, lack of books, poverty, and learning disabilities.

Through donations from friends and family, Adriana was able to raise money and purchase over 500 books to donate to the hospital. She contacted libraries for book donations, collected used books from members of her community, and shopped online and at rummage sales for additions to the library. Her project was shared through social media, a [press release](#) from the hospital, and a [feature](#) in her local newspaper.

Because of the high Spanish speaking population where the hospital is located, she provided both English and Spanish books for families to enjoy. "I was able to provide new families with a sense of bonding with their newborn through a book and help babies start comprehending words and their parents' voice," Adriana said. The library will serve as a way to encourage NICU parents who have limited contact with their premature baby to bond and promote development through the art of reading. Upon graduating from the NICU, babies will be will be gifted a book signed by their NICU nurses.

Adriana's library will continue to be sustained through the employees at St. John's Hospital. The Vice President of Philanthropy, Debi Klein, plans to hold additional book drives and replenish shelves with the books that Adriana donated. The library will be put in the hospital's newly built NICU unit this fall.



"This project has already impacted my leadership skills in ways that I could have never imagined," she said. "I have become more comfortable speaking with adults, especially on the phone and in person. It has helped me become more organized, reach my goals in a timely manner, and allowed me to make an impact in my community. I have become more confident in myself, and I proved to myself that I am stronger than I think I am."

To learn more about the Girl Scout Gold Award, visit [here](#)! To read about additional Gold Award projects and the differences Girl Scouts are making in communities near you, visit [here](#).

About GSCCC

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast serves over 10,200 girls across six counties and is committed to making the Girl Scout Leadership Experience available to girls in ways that impact their lives both in the moment and into the future. Girls participate in troops, individual projects, council events, day camps, resident camps and more. A variety of leadership, outdoor skills, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) based programs and events provide girls with opportunities to learn and explore in fun and informative ways. To join or volunteer in Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara or Ventura County, visit: <http://www.girlscoutscoc.org>.

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