



### **Girl Scout Creates Shelter for Feral Cats**

*Jenna Stuck from Simi Valley, CA, earns her Girl Scout Gold Award*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 18, 2020

**Ventura, CA —**

Jenna Stuck is a current senior at Royal High School in Simi Valley. She was concerned that her community lacked knowledge about feral cats and the resources available to control local colony populations. Lack of action allows feral cat colonies to continue to grow year after year, which can result in damages to a neighborhood's ecosystem including effects on local bird populations, the destruction of natural habitats, and injuries to domestic pets. Without a safe place to call home, feral cats usually gather at local animal shelters in search of food and provide rodent control in return. However, the benefits only go so far and Jenna began her search for a better solution.

"I plan to impact the feral cats in my community by providing them with shelter and support for their population," Jenna said. "My secondary audience is my community which I aim to educate about feral cats and encourage to get involved. The main point that I want to bring awareness to is the TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release) program offered across the county. This program allows average people to trap feral cats in their neighborhoods, bring them to a clinic where the cat is spayed/neutered, then released back to the wild. This is a great way to reduce the feral cat population with no harm to the cat colonies or the people affected by the feral cats."

Jenna aimed to educate her community on their local feral cat population, when and how to intervene with the cats, as well as how to solve the problem within their neighborhoods. "I want people to see that the cats themselves are not bad, and should be treated gently and with understanding," she said. "I want them to see that there are solutions to the problem that are peaceful and effective. I hope that through this project I've imparted an attitude of compassion for the wild cats as well as a desire for action."

To create a safe space for her local cat colony, Jenna created a permanent structure at the Camarillo Animal Shelter. Through a bake sale at her church, donations from The Building Materials Company, and donations from her troop, she was able to raise over \$450 for her building materials. She utilized extra supports, water-resistant paint, and even an insulated roof



to ensure the structure would last for years to come. Additionally, Jenna created online resources for individuals to learn more about feral cats and the TNR program.

On completing her Gold Award project, Jenna reflected on her growth in leadership. "At first I found it incredibly intimidating asking others for help," she said. "Asking for donations of money and time from my community pushed me beyond my comfort zone. However, I found that people were a lot more welcoming and supportive than I initially had feared." Jenna developed a new love for woodworking throughout the process, a skill she is currently using to construct planter boxes for her garden.

"I discovered that I could effectively coordinate a team and delegate tasks based on everyone's strengths," she said. "Beyond that, I found within myself the initiative to start such a large scale project. I gained an extraordinary amount of confidence through this experience."

Want to learn more about how girls are creating positive change in their corner of the universe and beyond? Check out additional information on the Girl Scout Gold Award [here](#). For more incredible projects from Girl Scouts in your area, check out our [2019-2020 Girl Scout Gold Awards Yearbook!](#)

### **About Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast**

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast serves over 8,800 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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