



## **Local Girl Scout Creates Community Resource Handbook**

*Celeste Elkort earns her Girl Scout Gold Award*

**Press Contact:**

Kathryn Nielsen

(805) 232-3977

[knielsen@girlscoutscoc.org](mailto:knielsen@girlscoutscoc.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 12, 2021

**Ventura, CA —**

Celeste Elkort recognized the hardships that some of her unhoused community members were facing, and she wanted to do something about it. Although the pandemic shutdowns presented plenty of obstacles, Celeste remained determined. This Ambassador Girl Scout, a senior at Westlake High School, reached out to Trish Carruth at Calvary Community Church and started to create a plan of action.

"I saw there was a gap between the amount of the resources available and the connection to the people who needed them," Celeste said. "Although there are numerous places where homeless people can find a place to shower, receive food, and obtain affordable housing, it is difficult to locate them. By creating a handbook that lists important services and how to access them, I was able to spread awareness of accessible services in my community."

Celeste began by researching all of the organizations in Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Simi Valley, and Moorpark that offer various resources for unhoused community members. She identified the mission statement, purpose, services offered, addresses, and the names of phone numbers of each organization's director. She confirmed that all of the available information was correct by directly contacting each organization. After creating a page template for each resource, she organized all of the information into Google Docs so her Community Care Resource Handbook could be easily updated and shared.

"The categories that I organized resources in were support and recovery groups, employment, mental health services, food pantries, medical services, housing and shelters, senior care, and disability care. I researched the local resources available and compiled a list that I then brought to Mrs. Carruth."

Additionally, Celeste created a more concise version of her handbook that she turned into pamphlets for Calvary Community Church. The church holds various service events for all kinds of community members, to which the pamphlets were readily available. Celeste's pamphlets and handbook were also converted into PDF documents, which she shared with other local



churches, service organizations, and nonprofits. Her completed handbook is accessible to all on a [free website](#) that she created.

On completing her project, Celeste said, "I learned that I can complete anything that I want to because I work hard and care about my projects. The task of completing a Gold Award seemed extremely daunting to me, and I am impressed that I was able to create a project that I am passionate about and proud of. I learned that I enjoy working with other people as a team to achieve a common goal."

Girl Scouts are always hard at work finding real-world solutions to issues in their communities and beyond. Are you ready to learn more about leaving your positive impact on the world? Discover how you can make a difference with the [Girl Scout Gold Award](#) today!

###

#### **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>.