

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Girl Scout Troops Receive Statewide Honor

Girl Scout Troop #406 from Jackson and Troop #515 from Gallipolis have been awarded the Outstanding Project Award from Make a Difference Day Ohio (MDDO) for making head scarves for cancer patients. More than 1,000 projects were performed state-wide for MDDO in 2009, and 650 were considered for the award but it was only given to ten groups or individuals.

Make A Difference Day is the largest national day of helping others. MDDO was created to promote participation by Ohioans in the national effort. The goal is to involve volunteers from the community to help meet a community need.

The Girl Scouts' project began when a Jackson community member, Vicki Davis, wanted to help those who needed head scarves but contemplated whether or not she had the means to produce the amount necessary for the patients.

Davis then approached Heidi Bowman, leader of troop 406, who then contacted local hospitals to inquire if there was a need for scarves to be made. She received overwhelming positive responses. The idea was next presented to both troops, who were ecstatic about the opportunity to help the community and learn to sew.

The troops gathered fabric for the scarves throughout Jackson and Gallia Counties. Bowman and leaders Deanna Bragg and Cheryl Markley went to churches and employers to ask for donations of material. The response was tremendously supportive – they collected more than 500 yards of fabric.

Between the months of January and August, 2009, the girls worked to produce 515 scarves. They delivered the scarves to five cancer facilities on Make a Difference Day, October 24, 2009, including Adena Health System, Chillicothe; Southern Ohio Medical Center, Portsmouth; O'Blennes Memorial Hospital, Athens County; Holzer Health System, Gallipolis; and the Holzer Medical Center, Jackson.

“The goal was for the girls to learn what a positive impact community service has, not only for the community, but for themselves,” explains Cheryl Markley. “It was remarkable how they took to it so quickly, especially not having any sewing experience. They learned a new skill and enjoyed using it to help others. Part of the Girl Scout Promise is to help people at all times. These girls, some in the eighth grade now, have been in scouting since kindergarten and they have such big hearts.”

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Troop 406 members who participated are troop leaders Heidi Bowman and Deanna Bragg, and Girl Scouts Madison Adkins, Sarah Bowman, Maycee Burnside, Chloe O'Connor, Taylor Evans, Maggie Edwards, Makenna Floyd, Madeline Lewis, Sarah Lewis, Alyssa Norvell, Jaiden Ousley, Courtney Perry, Isabella Scully-Tenpenny, Olivia Sheward, Madison Strawser and Jayden Webb. Troop 406 members are in kindergarten, first and second grade.

Troop 515 is comprised of troop leaders Tina Johnson, Cheryl Markley, John Markley, Karissa Martyn, Diane Purdum and Lori Sanders; and Girl Scouts Kathleen Allen, Katie Bostic, Kyla Coburn, Peyton Eastman, Kaylee Facemire, Kimberly Hurt, Alexis Johnson, Abbey Loveday, Molly Markley, Grace Martyn, Leia Moore, Mikaela Moore, Kelsey Purdum, McKinsey Sanders, Akeisha Saunders, Abbey Loveday and Whitney Terry. Troop 515 members are in sixth, seventh and eighth grade.

Girl Scout Janelle Parsons from another troop in Gallia County also helped make scarves, and community members Norma White from Wesley United Methodist Church, Jackson, and Linda Roach and Helen Lykins from Christ United Methodist Church, Jackson, where the scarves were made, also helped the girls and taught them to sew.

Since 2000, when MDDO was established, Ohio has led the nation in the number of service projects. Girl scouts across the state participated in numerous community service activities. In the decade since its inception, well over 3 million people have tackled thousands of projects that helped more than 25 million people.

The driving force behind the Girl Scouts' scarf project was to make a difference in the lives of people in Southeast Ohio who were dealing with a life-changing illness.

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the premier leadership development program for girls age 5 to 18. The mission is to build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts is shaping the next generation of women leaders through leadership and service in the arts, science, technology, environment, etiquette and manners, and numerous other experiences that are contemporary, compelling and relevant to today's girls.

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, headquartered in Columbus, serves 35,000 girls and 10,000 adult volunteers in 30 counties: Adams, Ashland, Coshocton, Crawford, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Guernsey, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Licking, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Muskingum, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Union, Vinton, Wayne and Wyandot.

For information on how to join, volunteer, or donate to Girl Scouts, call (800) 621-7042 or visit www.gsohiosheartland.org.

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PHOTO CUTLINE:

Girl Scouts from Jackson Daisy Troop 406, front rows, and Gallipolis Cadette troop 515, back rows, received their Outstanding Project Award for their Make A Difference Day head scarf project from Ohio's first lady Frances Strickland, left, and former first lady Hope Taft, right.