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Girl Scout Troop No. 60005 leader Michele Stoddard, far right, recognizes troop members who worked on projects for the Liberal Area Rape Crisis/Domestic Violence Services agency. The hours spent on this project went toward these girls' Silver Award. Others working on the project got hours toward their Bronze Award. Stoddard's daughter, McKenzie, second from right, was one of the young ladies who finished their hours for the Silver Award with the project. L&T photo/Robert Pierce

## **Scouts learn leadership through community service**

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

Thanks to some area Girl Scouts, a local agency has a new phone system and a supply of food on its shelves for its clients.

Starting in October 2012, members of Troop No. 60005 worked with the Liberal Area Rape Crisis/Domestic Violence Services agency on the two projects, and the youth were recognized Monday for their good deeds.

Nine of the girls have either finished or are working on hours for their Bronze Award, and a dozen more began working on their Silver Awards, with two finished and six still working on the award.

Hope Alvarez, director of LARC/DVS, said the Girl Scouts have made a great difference in her agency.

“They have done wonderful, wonderful things for our agency,” she said.

Girl Scout leader Michele Stoddard said her troop takes on a special community service project each year along with smaller ones that come up.

After working with the Liberal Animal Shelter in 2012, the girls took on the task of helping LARC/DVS this year. Some of the smaller projects included serving drinks at the Liberal Senior Center community Thanksgiving dinner, the Baker Arts Center’s Backyard Blast and several projects for the Liberal Good Samaritan Society.



The Good Sam projects included a tea party, planting flowers and collecting bird seed from Walmart, and Stoddard said troop members likewise went angel shopping for six kids from LARC/DVS and two seniors from Good Sam and did some planting at Dorothy’s House.

The youth also took their good works outside of the area by sending needed supplies to tornado-ravaged Moore, Okla. Stoddard encouraged those on hand Monday to check out a scrapbook of some of the girls' activities.

"We are a mixed troop, so we had girls working on Bronze and Silver awards this year," she said. "Our Bronze awards girls had to put in a minimum of 20 hours with LARC/DVS and be in the fourth or fifth grade. Congrats girls on making a difference in your community this year."

Silver award candidates needed a minimum of 50 hours and be in sixth, seventh or eighth grade.

"These girls worked in the donation room, help with food drives, step out of their comfort zone and did community presentations and finding out what other programs are doing," Stoddard said. "They found working in the donation room that a new phone system was in need. They started talking about how to help get that in place."

At the beginning of the phone project, Stoddard said troop members questioned Sadie Madden of LARC/DVS about the need for a new phone system.

"She said at times when we answer, we have to transfer to somebody else because of language or something," Stoddard said. "They do have calls that get dropped. She said we are in need of a phone system, and that's when the girls said we want to help with the phone system."

After putting \$300 into the project from their annual cookie sale, the local Girl Scouts then found out they only needed \$150 more to pay for the new system. Stoddard said this is when some local community members stepped up to help.

"Part of what they found out in their Silver Award was they had to have a partnership," she said. "They went to the Noon Lions Club and made a presentation there. They ended up with \$50. Danny and Kay Burtzloff gave them a \$50 check from there. We had talked to Grace Lutheran

and Faith Tabernacle. Rex gave them \$50, and we had \$25 from the Grace Lutheran Church.”

The girls later did a presentation to Liberal’s Walmart manager and helped get a grant to help keep food coming into LARC/DVS.

Stoddard explained what is necessary for both the Silver and Bronze awards.

“On the Silver, they had to do a project proposal and a cadet journey book,” she said. “Their project proposal had to list their journey book, who was on their team, describe the project, who the project will address, the target audience.”

Troop members chose Southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle as their target audience. After deciding on the donation room, phone system and food for LARC/DVS, Girl Scouts then had to discuss the reasons for the project.

Stoddard said the youth knew that the agency had lost a lot of its government funding.

“They feel like everybody needs a second chance, and they felt like they could make a big difference to a lot of different people,” she said. “I just felt that’s where their hearts led them.”

Stoddard said she believes what the girls are doing now will pay off in the future.

“We’re very proud of the girls,” she said. “They showed some great leadership skills.”

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