



Youth Leadership Essay Dr. Jack Bloomfield Award Winner

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Leadership is such an important skill to have because “Leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders” - Tom Peters. I am a middle school girl named Brianna Rizzo. I have a passion for my leadership in the arts. I consider myself an “Artist” which is basically an activist and leader who expresses their important cause through art. I am co-president of P.S. 232 student council and I spearhead many different school and outside organization initiatives. I have also been part of Girl Scouts for seven years and earned the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette could earn, the Silver Award, for my activism and leadership skills.

To start off, I continue to be a leader with Girl Scouts. Earning my Silver Award was very challenging. You have to do 50 plus hours of community service and create a take action project that is sustainable. I thought of bringing more arts into the schools. This is how my school's student council accomplished a lot with the arts and now we even added the importance of art in our student council mission statement. As a leader and Girl Scout you always have to use your resources wisely. Even though my school does not have many resources we used paper and markers which we used to make postcards for refugees. It turned into money to help the refugees to get their necessities through “Student's Rebuild”. The Bezos Family Foundation donated \$10 per postcard and we raised \$10,000! Then, with bottle caps we made a mural to bring awareness for people who don’t have clean water. We turned that into

clean water for families in South Sudan. Students donated money to have their initials on the bottle caps used for the mural and we sent the money through “The Iron Giraffe Challenge.” One other thing I did was make beaded charms for those who suffer from home insecurity and it helped improve their mental health. I brought these ideas to my school's student council and inspired others to help lead the way. With a \$200 Girl Scout scholarship we bought supplies to continue this activism.

However, even beyond Girl Scouts and student council I lead intergenerational beaded workshops at Grinnell Library. To do this I prepared pattern pages and steps. This takes lots of patience and skill to be able to lead these lessons. It was amazing to see after teaching the first group that people kept teaching each other how to do the pattern- more leaders! Each person made two of the beaded stars I taught so they could keep one and donate one to the library. Using the stars people left, I strung them together and made an art installation in the library to show everyone of all ages coming together with art.

When I'm older as a career choice I hope to become a teacher because not just at the library but even at my school I continue to lead lessons. At school I have collaborated with the 3rd and 4th grades to teach ELA lessons and to explain student council middle school initiatives. Even in my own class I led a mind mirror lesson for the book we were reading and even NYC Schools highlighted me on their Twitter page.

Overall, these are some of the many examples of how I showed leadership in my school, through Girl Scouts, outside organizations, and beyond my local community. I will continue to pursue my activism and make a difference. The best part of this is I have inspired other people along the way and they too became leaders!