

## Girl Scouts make Food Pantry of Green Cove Springs a little 'greener'

Three spruce up pick-up area toward Girl Scout Silver Award

By Kyla Woodard  
For Clay Today

GREEN COVE SPRINGS — With the help of three local girls looking to serve their community, the city just got a little more "green."

For months, Girl Scout Cadettes Kamryn Thompson, Calley Thompson and Hanna LoTempio researched and learned about their surrounding area to develop a project sure to make a substantial impact.

The three scouts have been working toward reaching their highest achievement yet, the Girl Scout Silver Award. One of the highest to earn as a Girl Scout, the award allows Cadettes to explore their community and bring about change to specific issues.

After thorough research, girls looking to earn the achievement are urged to pick an issue in their community and take action.

Working as a group, the girls noticed that the Food Pantry of Green Cove Springs needed some "beautifying." With the use of plants, the girls of Troop 672 made that happen.

The scouts provided three different plant ventures to encourage some change to the landscape.



With Calley Thompson's interactive "Plant Share" stand, residents can stop by the pantry to pick-up or drop-off a plant of their choice.

Kamryn Thompson took a hands-on approach to transforming the area by pulling weeds and planting new flower beds for the community.

LoTempio approached the project by planting her pollinator garden, which was sure to attract many butterflies.

Claiming a section of the food bank to work on, each girl began the process of transforming the outside area.

Food pantry volunteer Peggy Cloud said she remembers when the girls first brought them their proposal to do the project. She said their professionalism and ideas made the choice an easy decision.



Cadettes Kamryn Thompson, Calley Thompson and Hanna LoTempio decided to devote their Girl Scout Silver Award volunteer project to cleaning up flowerbeds and adding new plants at the Food Pantry of Green Cove Springs.



"Each girl had a part for this proposal, and it was quite impressive...not only of how they presented themselves, but how they got in there and worked as hard as they did," Cloud said.

Calley Thompson said her choice for her project came from having to take the time to build hers from scratch. Calley Thompson said she used the leftover wood in her house to make a stand. With her dad's help, she could put the intricate structure together.

Additionally, Calley Thompson spray-painted the stand while hand-painting the smaller details to give it her unique charisma.



Calley noted her reason for participating in the project was to help her community and allow herself to get out and get active.

"It would have been easy, and it would have probably helped get me to do stuff. Because I'm usually laying down or just not doing anything," Calley Thompson said.

Kamryn Thompson said the idea for her project came about when she noticed the area covered in weeds and grass. Her goal was to make the area more appealing to the community. Kamryn Thompson furthered that the process of carrying out the project came with a lot of effort.

From having the right tools to use and knowing what you're digging up, Kamryn Thompson said it was an extensive process. However, she said it is a gesture that she hopes will impact the community in a positive way.

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# Silver

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"A lot of people come here to get food. And, not very many people pay attention to the outside. So, if we make it better and prettier, people will pay attention and help the community more," Kamryn Thompson said.

With LoTempio's love of butterflies, she said her pollinator garden was an easy decision. She said her process consisted of researching the types of plants necessary to attract the colorful insects.

LoTempio added that her act of planting the garden was fueled by her need to improve her community.

"It makes my community a better

place," Hanna LoTempio said.

Despite the blazing hot sun, the girls continued to make their mark in the community, spending 50 hours dedicated to their projects. The girls said working as a group was an equal highlight of their experience.

Food pantry volunteer Bill Bland recalled wanting to help the girls when he saw them pulling up grass. However, he said he saw their persistence and drive the girls had to do it all on their own.

"Speaking for the food pantry as a whole, [we're] just overwhelmed with what these young girls have been able to accomplish for us," Bland said.

Finding a group to work with toward the prestigious award is one step of the venture. And, for the girls, that was an

easy action. Since they were Daisy-level Girl Scouts, all three girls have built a connection and friendship.

Sarah Thompson, the mother of both Kamryn and Calley, said that it had been an honor to watch the girls grow up together and help each other reach their goals.

"They have all different views, and they've come together, and they've learned how to cooperate and find common ground and work as a team. Not something young girls want to do these days," Thompson said.

Kelly LoTempio, the mother of LoTempio, said that she is proud of the girls for taking the time to impact the community, especially during summer.

"They didn't have to do it. So, I think it's really cool that they want to, and they're

excited about it," Kelly LoTempio said.

Kamryn Thompson said her favorite thing about working with her teammates was their ability to communicate effectively and have fun together.

"The best thing was working with my group is we had a lot of great moments together. And, we make a lot of new ones. Being together for so long [and] making so many memories is one of the best things," Kamryn Thompson said.

Each girl's journey to becoming a Girl Scout is marked by their necessity to impact the world around them. And together, rain or shine, they hope to continue to do that.

"Making the world a better place is the best thing..for me being a Girl Scout," Kamryn Thompson said.