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From a young age, I have been inspired by the power of education to transform lives, and volunteering has been my outlet of turning that belief to action. Over my high school career, I have completed more than 250 hours of community service, dedicating 80 of those to my Girl Scout Gold Award. I began Girl Scouts just before ninth grade, the same year I began volunteering for Don Bosco Community Center, inspired by the community partnership of my school, School of the Holy Child in Rye. After volunteering in their after-school tutoring programs and managing their soup kitchen for two weeks in ninth grade, I reflected on interactions I had with adult volunteers and staff. I was confident that this organization was aligned with my school's goal to act selflessly to transform the lives of underprivileged communities and embrace our motto: "Joy in teaching, joy in learning."

For my Gold Award, I designed and taught an interactive STEM program at Don Bosco Community Center, developing my own curriculum and leading one hour classes for students in grades 1-5. I hosted this program in two grade-specific, two-week sessions in August 2025, and an additional session in February, reaching approximately 30 students. Through platforms such as CodeHS, Code.org, and Scratch, students learned the fundamentals of block coding and problem-solving, while engaging in hands-on activities that made STEM fun and accessible.

My interest in coding began when I entered Holy Child in fifth grade, but it became truly meaningful in ninth grade when an Introduction to Computer Science class challenged me beyond my expectations. I enjoyed solving logic games and exploring problems from various perspectives with my peers. Guiding my friends in class showed me the value of encouraging

others, and myself, to push beyond perceived limits and self doubt. This experience inspired me to dedicate my Girl Scout Gold Award to teaching STEM, sharing not just knowledge but support and confidence with young learners.

One moment that truly stood out to me occurred this February, when a child I had worked with over the summer, who has special needs, recognized me preparing for class. He excitedly ran over to tell me how much fun he had in my program, and how he learned to never give up. That interaction reminded me that the impact of service goes beyond lesson plans, and instead lies in the joy I helped foster in others. My volunteer work reflects the mission of St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester by fostering an "environment of support," empowering students to grow and succeed. By sharing not just knowledge, but also support and confidence, with young learners, I have learned that encouragement and care can foster growth and challenge people to confidently manage experiences outside of their comfort zone. This principle, I believe, embodies the hospital's mission of charity, the dignity of human life, and commitment to community.