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### **St. Vincent's Hospital Annual Youth Awards 2026**

When I think back to my fondest childhood memories, I think about the people who supported me. Mentors, coaches, friends, all coming together to be my safety net, the people I knew I could count on.

Now, I take opportunities to give back to communities that meant everything to me. I have become the person that helped me along, and I build sustainable infrastructure to not only maintain, but improve the spaces that I love.

I developed my love of service through Girl Scouts. I enjoyed playing games with my troop, but I understood the importance of visiting veterans' homes, running food drives, and making the world a better place (per the Girl Scout Law). I remember the girls who ran these events, and that's why it's so meaningful to do the same. When I run the annual dance, or play games with kindergarteners during recruitment, I share their excitement.

I also recognize that my Girl Scout experience wasn't perfect. I'm interested in the outdoors, but survival skills like knot-tying and pocketknife safety were stigmatized. Through a series of curriculums, troop visits, and a culminating event for my Gold Award, I taught girls in my community how valuable outdoor skills can be, and to see knives as tools instead of dangerous.

I also make a difference in the democracy of Girl Scouts, an ever-changing organization. As an elected National Delegate, I confer with Girl Scouts from all over our seven-county, 22,000-girl council on national issues. This summer, I will represent them at our national meeting.

Through Girl Scouts I also participate in robotics, which inspired my interest in engineering. I joined robotics in second grade and, again, I remember how cool and supportive the older girls were. Now on the high school team, it's my turn to be supportive (and hopefully cool) by running meetings for younger girls. I teach them engineering design, teamwork, and how to be proud of what they've made. I am passionate about getting girls involved in STEM, which I do through community events like Engineering is Fun, an event in partnership with IBM that encourages 80 Girl Scouts annually to participate in STEM.

My favorite event to manage is the Test Lab, the elementary/middle school part of the Engineering EXPO, a fair with 3,000+ attendees annually. I participate in biweekly planning and recruit other robotics teams to run stations and organize the day to make sure attendees learn and have fun.

I am a mentor for Kids4Tech, the MasterCard STEM curriculum, where I teach a group of 25 sixth graders to code and present their work. I was a member of the program six years ago

and I now contribute to its success. To ensure the mentorship program's sustainability, I recruit other high schoolers to shadow me and teach students.

Building on my desire to support programs and places I love, I am a founding member of my library's teen advisory board, a group that meets monthly and works to improve the library, especially for teens—like planning a “Teacher in the Library” program and an “After Hours” teens-only event—and have been working with the city to make the library more sustainable. Through a series of grants that we applied for, the board has installed water bottle filling stations and created a seed library for residents. We also run programming to educate the community about water quality, native plants, and pollinators.

My other community is my synagogue. As a young kid, teachers' helpers guided me. I jumped at the opportunity to do this as a seventh grader, and have volunteered weekly since then, ensuring my class of second graders learns and feels supported. The kids have a variety of learning styles, so I ensure everyone is included and learns however they best engage. I adapt teaching materials and the classroom structure to suit learning needs, including for deaf, dyslexic, hyperactive, and anxious students.

This passion for service has been instilled in me my whole life, but many haven't had the same opportunities to give back. As my school's NHS community service chair, I create ways for students to engage with the community. I connect needy organizations to volunteers, and volunteers to needy organizations, encouraging my peers to make a difference.

Throughout my high school career, I have been able to serve my community for over 870 hours. These experiences have meant so much to me because as I volunteer and lead initiatives to make my community a better place, I think back to the people who did the same for me. I have been supported my whole life, and I intend to support others for the rest of it.