

Screenshots below are from 2019 Girl Scout Gold Award Yearbook. See original document (pages 1 and 17) at the following link:

<https://www.gscnc.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gscnc/documents/Our-Council/2019%20Award%20Yearbook.pdf>

[gscnc.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gscnc/documents/Our-Council/2019%20Award%20Yearbook.pdf](https://www.gscnc.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gscnc/documents/Our-Council/2019%20Award%20Yearbook.pdf)

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO



Dear Girl Scout family,

Girl Scouts are leading change in their communities and around the globe, inspired by their passion to take a stand and transform things for the better. This is demonstrated by all the girls featured in our 2019 award yearbook.

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GOLD AWARD GIRL SCOUTS



Kelsey Kitzke

Arlington, VA

Ending the Stigma

Kelsey organized a panel at local high schools with women to discuss reproductive healthcare.



Rachel Klumpp

Silver Spring, MD

Strength Within

Rachel created a Facebook page to educate young teens about teen suicide through videos, brochures, bracelets and a presentation.

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A more detailed description of the Gold Award project can be found on the NARAL blog post entitled “I brought two activists to my high school to share their abortion stories, and it was powerful” at the following link: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200204211513/https://prochoiceva.wordpress.com/2018/03/05/i-brought-two-activists-to-my-high-school-to-share-their-abortion-stories-and-it-was-powerful/> (original NARAL article written about the Gold Award by the awardee was recently “password protected” by NARAL so use the above archived link instead to view the article or see the screenshots on the next page)



ABORTION, GUEST POST

I brought two activists to my high school to share their abortion stories, and it was powerful.

Posted by NARAL PRO-CHOICE VIRGINIA on MARCH 5, 2018

BY KELSEY KITZKE, STUDENT ACTIVIST

One Sunday morning, I sat in the back of a classroom in the Catholic school of the church my family attended. That Sunday morning, like every other Sunday morning for the past seven years, I was attending Catholic Sunday School. I sat there with twenty or so other 13-year-old girls as we listened to our class instructor, the cross hanging on the wall she was standing in front of, tell us that we shouldn't be making out with our boyfriends and most we most definitely shouldn't be having sex. In previous days we had listened to another one of our teachers, this time a man old enough to be any of our grandfathers, tell us that we shouldn't be using any form of birth control other than the rhythm method. Abortion was wrong and immoral, period.

Of course, the sins of sex and abortion were not the only moral teachings I got out of Catholicism. I've always felt that the Church teaches us to be compassionate to everyone, not because they belong to a particular religion, race, or class, but because they are human like the rest of us. If we are to truly be compassionate towards every human we must also be understanding. Which is why some of the Catholic Church's positions, particularly those in relation to abortion, always confused me so much; they seemed inherently uncatholic, inherently uncompassionate.

I am now in my junior year of high school, and have developed an intense interest in women's rights, particularly, in recent years, in women's reproductive rights. Having been a Girl Scout for the past 12 years, I have reached the point in Girl Scouts where many begin to work on their Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can receive. The Gold Award requires girls to work on a project that will make an impact in their community, focused on something that they care deeply about. To me, abortion rights seemed like a natural fit as a project issue. When I began developing specifically what my project would be, I thought back to what I felt was missing from conversations about abortion rights. Not conversations just in communities and classrooms, but in our larger national dialogue: the stories of women who have had abortions themselves.

I think, inevitably, when impacted people are left out of the conversation, misconceptions about the issue and the people affected by that issue form quickly and dangerously.

With that in mind, I developed a project that dealt with getting rid of abortion stigma and misconceptions by focusing on the women who have got abortions themselves. With the incredible help of NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia, I decided to organize two events held at local Arlington high schools for young students interested in learning more about the diverse set of reasons women have abortions. At each event, I planned on having two women come to share their own abortion stories with a guided group discussion about what misconceptions persist in our communities surrounding abortion and what they learned from hearing these personal stories.

The first event of my Gold Award was held at my school, Yorktown High School, in Arlington in the beginning of February. NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia connected me with two Virginia activists who have had abortions who were interested in sharing their stories. These two women, who were brave enough and gracious enough to talk about such a personal matter in front of a group of strangers, shared two diverse stories that spoke to the range and complexity of reasons why women get abortions. I would say that most people who attended the event that day had not ever heard someone tell them about their abortion.

It was impossible not to connect to their emotions and understand their reasoning because such deeply personal stories require us to do so.

In the group discussion that followed, it was clear that even though many of the students had walked into that room that afternoon already identified as pro-choice, by the end they would walk out with a different perspective on what abortion means in the actual world. Many left with a new understanding on how to talk to friends and family about abortion: focusing on the actual lives of women affected. Some of them already have started that conversation with their own family members.

Ultimately, I see the most important turning point in the future of America's conversation about abortion as a turn to focus on women instead of abortion. Abortion is a medical procedure; the women who have abortions are humans with complex lives and needs. Any conversation about abortion absolutely must be centered around the women who have and will have abortions. Like any policy debate, abortion can be focused on theoretical notions and ideals or on the people who will have to live through those ideals in action. Right now, I think we would be wise to remember the people before anything else, which is exactly what happened during this first of two events.

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1 min/1hr