

# Standout Student: Dunwoody senior fights human trafficking

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Most people mainly associate Girl Scouts with their popular eponymous cookies, but Dunwoody High School senior Sydney Holmes is proving that there is so much more to Girl Scouts than Samoas and Thin Mints.

In her junior year, Sydney, who has been a Girl Scout since seventh grade, was horrified to discover that Atlanta is the number one city in America for sex trafficking. Sydney decided to devote her Girl Scout Gold Award project, entitled “Human Trafficking: Stop it HERE and THERE,” to fight human trafficking through increasing awareness.



Sydney Holmes is a Dunwoody High School senior

With the help of local author Lorraine Fast, Sydney created a seminar that she led at a local after-school center for over 100 children.

“Because the subject matter itself of trafficking is very graphic and not appropriate for younger children, my project was not to educate about trafficking, but how to remain safe and be aware of their surroundings, and know who trustworthy people are to help them make safe decisions,” said Sydney. “My seminar started with [training in] ‘good touch/bad touch,’ ‘stranger danger,’ knowing the ‘friendly enemy’ (the potential trafficker) and the tricks they use to lure kids in, and cyber safety.”

Sydney was not content simply helping children locally. On a mission trip to Costa Rica, she donated items to an after-school clubhouse, had all seminar materials translated into Spanish and helped give the

seminar six times at four different schools, reaching 250 children.

*"I wanted to teach children in my community [and in Costa Rica] that is OK to tell an adult 'no' if they want to touch your private areas or take inappropriate pictures, or ask you to keep secrets from your parents," she said.*

For her work fighting human trafficking, Sydney was honored as Scout of the Year by the Dunwoody/Sandy Springs Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter and placed third in the state of Georgia.

"Sydney has shown that she is diligent, she follows through on all projects, she is a team player and she can accomplish tasks in a courteous and timely manner," said Sydney's Girl Scout Troop Leader, Bobbe Gillis. "Sydney lives by the Girl Scout law and upholds the principles of scouting in all her interactions. It has been a pleasure to watch her grow socially, intellectually and emotionally. I believe she is well equipped to excel in a college environment."

Outside of Girl Scouts, Sydney is co-consul of the Latin Club and participates in cross country, track and field, and chorus. Her favorite subjects are social studies and Latin.

**What's Next:**

Sydney hopes to attend Shorter University and become a high school history teacher.

*This article was prepared and written by Catherine Benedict, a senior at The Westminster Schools.*

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