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## Ellie Viscusi brings the 'Sunshine'

The Holland Middle School seventh-grader's concern for others is shining through as she works to secure her Silver Award from the Girl Scouts. She has joined forces with her family and friends over the last several months to create cloth "Sunshine Sacks" to donate to Family Promise of Lower Bucks. See story on page 8.

Photo by Joan Hellyer



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home to get the news, she lost 30% of her enrollment. "I was got my 20 structures, she said with a wrinkle in her eye. In 2006, was one who came up with the name "Butter" the motto became, "With Bu- store, I got the best greeting of

# Ellie Viscusi's concern for others shines through

by Joan Hellyer

Elisabeth Viscusi's concern for others is shining through quite brightly as she works to secure her Silver Award from the Girl Scouts.

The Holland Middle School seventh-grader, who goes by the name Ellie, has joined forces with her family and friends over the last several months to create cloth "Sunshine Sacks" to donate to Family Promise of Lower Bucks. The Middletown-based relief agency assists homeless families who are working their way back to self-sufficiency.

Ellie said she hoped the handmade sacks would give the agency's clients a boost.

"I just want them to realize that even if they are going through a situation there are still people remembering them

and caring," said Ellie, a member of Cadette Girl Scout Troop No. 2009. The troop is one of 23 Girl Scout troops in the Rock United Service Unit.

The Silver Award is the highest honor Girl Scouts in sixth-through eighth-grade can earn, said Ellie's troop leader, Danielle McElhaugh. Only about 10 percent of Girl Scouts nationwide earn the Silver Award "which is why Ellie's hard work should be recognized and celebrated," she said.

Ellie used old gift cards at craft stores to buy some of the materials to make the sacks along with lots of donated supplies, especially from her grandmother, Kathy Viscusi, who sews a lot. The materials consisted of many different types of prints and textures.

The 13-year-old and her closest friends, Kaelyn Loftus and

Kyleigh Hudson, learned in the fall of 2019 how to use a sewing machine to sew together 30 sacks for the project. They set up shop in Ellie's living room in her family's Northampton home and worked diligently to create the "Sunshine Sacks." Each sack measures approximately 20-inches by 24-inches and has a name tag attached to it so the recipient can put their name on it. The sacks also have draw strings sewn into them so they can be carried easily.

Ellie said her friends put in at least 10 volunteer hours each during the project and she put in more than 60 hours of service time while working through the project's various phases.

In addition to creating the bags, Ellie also had to secure toiletry donations to put in the sacks. The Girl Scout didn't have to look far to secure the

supplies.

Ellie's mother, Jennifer, is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing chapter based in Lower Makefield and Ellie is a member of the chapter's Children of the American Revolution.

Last year, while working on the sacks, Ellie told the DAR members about her project. The members responded by giving her an enormous amount of toiletries to include in the 30 bags. "They were very supportive," she said.

Ellie and her band of volunteers filled up the sacks with the toiletries and delivered them to Family Promise. The organization's clients appreciated the creative gifts, agency director Jessica Schwartz said.

"They were impressed and grateful when they learned that she and her friends had sewn the bags themselves," Schwartz said. "It has been nice to be able to give the families, especially the children, something new that is their own. It is by partnering with caring community members like Ellie that we are able to help these families feel comforted and cared for during this time of crisis. We are grateful she reached out to us."

As it turned out, Ellie's outreach project was not yet complete after that delivery because she received an overwhelmingly amount of toiletry donations from the DAR members. The scout had to figure out what to do the donations.

So, she and her friends got back to work and sewed about two dozen more sacks together. Now Ellie is trying to find another relief organization who will hand out the Sunshine Sacks



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# Talent contest winner *Soroptimists hosting* **Sixth Annual Designer Bag Bingo**

Sasha Kleiner, of Richboro, won second place earlier this month at the Bucks Fever Talent Show at the New Hope Winery. She is shown here performing "Someone Gets Hurt." Congratulations!



If you are looking for a great girls' day out, tickets are now on sale for the Designer Bag Bingo hosted each year by Soroptimist International of Indian Rock.

Cited as one of the classiest Bingos in Bucks County, the event gets better each year.

Its purpose is to raise funds for the club's educational-focused programs that lead to the economic empowerment of women and girls facing obstacles to future success.

Join them for a delightful afternoon at "The Sky Is the Limit" being held on Sunday, April 19th, at Spring Mill Manor, 171 Jacksonville Road, Ivyland.

The fun begins when doors open at 12:30pm for a silent auction and raffles of elegant themed baskets and Lucky Bucks cash prize.

It continues with a buffet and cash bar at 1:00pm and games from 2:00 to 6:00pm.

Game prizes feature hand-bags from top designers such as Calvin Klein, Coach, Dooney and Bourke, Michael Kors, and Kate Spade.

Advance purchase tickets (including the buffet and a 10-game packet) are \$40.

For tickets, more information or to become a sponsor, contact fundraising-committee@soroptimistindianrock.org.

Purchase deadline is April 10th.

This event is appropriate for children 12-18 accompanied by an adult.

For additional information or to become a member, visit [soroptimistindianrock.org](http://soroptimistindianrock.org) and [soroptimist.org](http://soroptimist.org).

## Ellie Viscusi

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to those they serve who are in need.

Once she finishes donating all the sacks, Ellie, who has been in scouts since kindergarten, will be able to present her 33-page PowerPoint presentation to the troop to secure her Silver Award.

"Ellie, and any other girl that decides to invest their time and efforts towards earning a higher award like this is inspiring," said McElhaugh, her troop leader. "I'm very proud of Ellie and the leadership and commitment

she has shown to execute her project."

Ellie said the experience has taught her a lot and she's using it to convince herself to try and do other new things - like participate in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) competition.

She has advice for others who are hesitant to take a chance on something they are not used to doing.


"If you plan something out of your reach just try it because you never know how it might turn out," Ellie said.

## LOCAL GALLERY

Send us your photos from local community events and we may feature them in our next edition!

Send photos to [mallen@timespub.com](mailto:mallen@timespub.com)






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