



Volunteer Guide to Adult Recognitions 2020-2021

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Creating a Year-Round Culture of Appreciation

People volunteer for countless reasons, but underneath it all, most volunteers are motivated by the quality of their performance. When volunteers know their time and energy are appreciated and that they are valued by Girl Scouts, they commit themselves to the organization. Volunteers also want to know that their service is helping the greater good—that together we made a difference in girls' lives and, through our mission, made a difference in the world. Therefore, volunteer recognition is one of the most powerful tools for retaining the invaluable women and men who volunteer for Girl Scouts.

The key to successfully recognizing volunteers is:

- Do it well.
- Do it often.
- Make it meaningful.

Creating a Year-Round Culture of Appreciation

A culture of appreciation is one where anyone working for the mission of Girl Scouts feels respected and valued for their service and contribution. The ideal volunteer recognition system includes a mixture of informal and formal methods that acknowledge all volunteer accomplishments, regardless of role and length of service, and meet a wide variety of personal preferences. Key elements for a successful recognition system include inclusiveness, accessibility, and consistency.

Thanking a volunteer at the end of their term of appointment is a great opportunity to market and encourage participation in the same role or other opportunities throughout the council. However, be sure to show appreciation in appropriate ways throughout each term and not only at the end of the term or at one recognition event.

Informal Rewards/Appreciation for Volunteers

Informal rewards are **day-to-day ways to say “thank you” to volunteers**—they are intangible benefits and heartfelt displays of recognition. These sincere expressions of appreciation are based on specific contributions and are given in a timely manner. Informal recognition is powerful and effective, because volunteers feel valued by a personal touch. Examples of meaningful informal rewards include:

- A welcome or thank-you card or letter
- Skill-building learning opportunities (for example, how to use social media to network)
- **Sending the volunteer’s supervisor or CEO a letter recognizing their contributions**
- **Complimenting a volunteer’s work to a supervisor or co-worker (in the volunteer’s presence)**
- **Showing interest in a volunteer’s personal life (such as asking about a volunteer’s grandchild or weekend plans)**
- A shout-out on Facebook or Twitter

Formal Recognition for Volunteers

Unlike informal rewards—which are given as often as possible—formal recognition includes the periodic presentation of tokens of appreciation and are more official in nature. Formal recognitions are given to an individual or group of volunteers and are particularly useful in generating a sense of connectedness among a group and to the organization. Examples of meaningful, formal recognitions include:

- Achievement certificates
- Nominations for local, state, and national awards
- Public recognition in front of peers and/or media
- Personalized gifts or awards (such as a five-year anniversary memento)
- Badges and pins

When planning formal recognition, ask yourself these questions:

- Is this real and relevant to the entire audience?
- Is this how volunteers want money and time to be spent?
- Will this build the team and create a sense of celebration?

Formal Adults Awards for Volunteers

Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada is proud to offer a series of council and national awards that help us formally recognize volunteers who devote time and energy to our movement. Below is a brief summary of the available awards. For detailed descriptions of the awards and their criteria, please review the [GSSN Adult Recognitions Chart](#).

GSSN Council Recognitions

New-Found Treasure Award

Recognizes the outstanding efforts of a Girl Scout volunteer who is making a significant impact in their second year.

Innovation Award

Recognizes an individual who has been instrumental in planning or assisting with membership recruitment, leading to membership growth in an underserved area.

Outdoor Trailblazer Award

Recognizes an individual who has developed and/or facilitated outstanding outdoor experiences for girls.

Virtual Ingenuity Award

Recognizes an individual who has shown ingenuity in transitioning their troop to meet virtually and to keep girls engaged in their Girl Scout experience

Heritage Award

Recognizes an outstanding individual who has used their knowledge of Girl Scout history and traditions to positively impact community cultivation, volunteer support, and/or girl program delivery.

Juliette Gordon Low Society

Recognizes individuals who have made a planned or deferred gift to Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada.

GSUSA National Recognitions

Volunteer of Excellence

Recognizes volunteers who have contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with girls in any pathway to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through use of the National Program Portfolio or who have contributed outstanding service **in support of the Council's mission** delivery to girl and adult members.

Appreciation Pin

Recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering the GSLE within one geographic area of service.

Honor Pin

Recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience; this support has had measurable impact on two or more geographic areas of service to reach and surpass the mission-delivery goals of the Council.

Thanks Badge

Honors an individual whose ongoing commitment, leadership, and service have had an exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the entire GSSN Council or the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Thanks Badge II

Honors a previous Thanks Badge award recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role which resulted in a measurable impact benefitting the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Awards Nomination Process

Volunteers and staff across all departments and functions within GSSN are encouraged to participate in the nomination of adults or volunteer teams for formal awards. The nomination process for the GSSN and GSUSA adult awards is simple and welcomes participation by girl and adult members council-wide. **Here's how it works:**

Step 1: Review the available adult awards and find the right award for your nominee.

Step 2: Check the past awardee list (available at <http://www.gssn.org/en/for-volunteers/recognitions.html>) to see what awards your candidate may have already earned.

Step 3: Complete the [online Nomination Form](#). One nomination is required for every award.

Step 4: Recruit an additional person to complete and submit the online [Letter of Endorsement](#). This cannot be the same person that submitted the nomination.

- One letter of endorsement is required for all GSSN Council Awards, as well as Volunteer of Excellence, Honor Pin, and Appreciation Pin.
- Two letters of endorsement are required for the Thanks Badge and the Thanks Badge II.

All nomination and endorsement forms, along with additional volunteer recognition resources, can be found online at <http://www.gssn.org/en/for-volunteers/recognitions.html>.

Awards Review Process

Once your nominations and endorsements are submitted they are reviewed by a staff member for accuracy and completeness. Nominators will be contacted if any further information is needed. Your completed nomination is then prepared for review by the Volunteer Recognition Task Force.

The Volunteer Recognition Task Force meets to review all of the nominations based on the award criteria and the information provided in the packet.

1. Each member reads through the nomination and compares it to the established criteria.
2. After review of the nomination, the members vote to recommend that the award be: A) Approved, B) Approved, but for a different award, or C) Not approved.
 - a. For early submissions, the Task Force may determine that a nomination does not provide enough information and will ask the nominators for a supplement by the final review date.
3. **Members casting a negative vote state the reasons they feel the nomination doesn't meet the criteria for the award.**
4. A final vote is taken and a majority decision is reached.
5. Approved nominations are submitted to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Awards Submission and Review Timeline

February 1, 2021	All nomination and endorsement materials due.
February 2– March 1	Volunteer Recognition Task Force meets for review of nominations.
March 6	Proposed list of honorees sent to the Board of Directors.

March 8

Notifications sent to all awardees and nominators.

April 17

Awards presented at the 2021 Volunteer Recognition Reception.

How to Write a Strong Nomination and Endorsement

We want to know how fabulous your award candidates are so that we can recognize them! This chart shows how an appreciation statement, with a little thought, can become a strong nomination statement for the Task Force’s review.

Keep in mind that the Task Force can only make their decisions based on the information that is **provided in the nomination and endorsement**. It’s unlikely that they have a personal relationship with the nominee. Providing specific details about their achievements is crucial.

Appreciation Statement	Thoughtfully Consider:	Strong Nomination Statement
<i>“She has been a leader for a long time.”</i>	How many years? Through which levels? How many girls and/or troops have they impacted?	<i>“For 11 years she has lead a large troop from Daisies, persevering through the middle school years, to their current Senior troop. Four of her 15 girls are on track to earn their Gold Award!”</i>
<i>“He always goes above and beyond.”</i>	Be specific! Tell a story about the great benefits those around him receive due to his efforts.	<i>“His troop voted to start the aMuse Journey. Because he has never considered himself a creative person when it comes to artistic endeavors, he recruited troop parents, artists, and actors as resources for his girls to draw from. As a result, the girls have had a great time meeting community experts and discovering parent talent in their own troop! They now have several opportunities for Take Action projects.”</i>
<i>“She is a great leader.”</i>	What kind of leadership qualities does she bring? What makes her stand out from other leaders?	<i>“As an experienced troop leader, she goes out of her way to mentor and support new volunteers. She makes sure that troops across our Service Unit are being girl-led and helps volunteers understand how to let girls lead their experience.”</i>

Examples of Awards Nominees

Not quite sure what award your nominee qualifies for? Check out some examples of potential award candidates below.

Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada Awards

Example of an Innovation Award Nominee

A volunteer discovered **that many girls at her child's school were unable** to join Girl Scouts due to a lack of volunteers. She worked with her area Recruitment Specialist to hold a series of Girl Scout family nights where families from her school could come and try out Girl Scout activities with her troop. During those meetings, she arranged for older Girl Scouts to run activities with the girls while she talked to the parents about volunteering as Troop Leaders. Two new troops have started at this school due to her enthusiasm and engagement.

Example of a New-Found Treasure Nominee

A volunteer is in his second-year as a Girl Scout Troop Leader. He leads an exceptionally active troop that has completed a leadership journey and earned multiple Girl Scout badges. He works closely with the girls to make sure their troop is girl-led and every Girl Scout has an opportunity to participate in troop planning. Their troop loves participating in community service and he has gone above and beyond to help organize new opportunities for their troop throughout the year. He is an active participant in his local Service Unit and has helped organized larger-scale service events for troops in his area.

Example of an Outdoor Trailblazer Award Nominee

A volunteer saw an opportunity to expose more girls to outdoor programming by organizing a volunteer-run summer day camp program. This volunteer worked with local troop leaders and program vendors to organize a five-day program that allowed girls to experience outdoor activities in their area, including hiking, canoeing, and archery. This day camp served 50 Girl Scouts in an area where there is typically limited outdoor programming provided.

Example of a Virtual Ingenuity Award Nominee

A volunteer knew that between distance learning, COVID restrictions and associated family concerns, keeping girls engaged in Girl Scouts was going to be more important than ever. This volunteer found resources to keep girls engaged and inventive ways to present badge work. This volunteer also helped the girls feel more security through the familiarity of continuing to participate in troop meetings.

Example of a Heritage Award Nominee

A volunteer noticed that many of the new troop leaders in her area were not familiar with Girl Scout traditions. She worked with her Service Unit Leadership Team and the GSSN Training Specialist to develop a series of Girl Scout History and Traditions workshops. These workshops gave new and experienced leaders an opportunity to learn about traditional songs, games, and activities that they can use with their own troops. More than 30 leaders have participated in the workshops and more sessions have been requested.

Girl Scouts of the USA Awards

Example of an Honor Pin Nominee

A Facilitator realized that although the council created online courses and resources about the GSLE, at volunteer meetings she heard comments indicating that many volunteers still were hesitant to use Journeys to deliver the GSLE to girls. She worked with council staff to develop a GSLE Coach role, which would support all direct-service volunteers as they implemented what they learned in the courses and put Journeys into action. This role was piloted in four service-delivery teams where, after the first year, Journey sales increased by 30 percent; girls shared the impact of 14 new take-action projects via the **council's web site**, and the volunteer-satisfaction scores increased by 12 percent.

Example of a Thanks Badge Nominee

A volunteer saw an opportunity to **use Journeys to increase membership in one of the council's** target markets through the camp pathway. She helped the council partner with local companies and groups to provide in-kind, financial, and volunteer support to build a Take-Action Tree House at each camp. She led a task group of girls to design and develop progressive programming, based on girl-led processes and Journey content, which culminated in take-action projects. The three-year project brought in 300 new Girl Scouts, a 5 percent overall increase in camp registrations the following year, 90 new volunteers, and new partnerships with 11 local organizations

Example of a Thanks Badge II Nominee

After receiving the Thanks Badge, the volunteer from the Thanks Badge example was motivated by the success of the Take-Action Tree House project and submitted to present this best practice at a GSUSA conference. She then served for two years on a national task group to help educate and support all 111 other councils as they create long-term plans that integrate all council departments to implement the cap pathway to grow membership and deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) through Journey use.

Example of an Appreciation Pin Nominee

At an event, a Troop Leader noticed that the diversity of the girls did not match the diversity of the **community. She talked with her council's staff members and found that they had identified a potential** for membership increase among the Hispanic communities in her area. She partnered with the service-delivery team to create and implement recruitment strategies to reach both girls and adults and new ways of work to support new members. As a result, Hispanic girl membership rose by 14 percent and adult membership by 15 percent last year. While those new members participated in series and camps, 78 percent of them participated in troops.

Examples of a Volunteer of Excellence Nominee

A volunteer Program Advisor works over the course of the year with a teen advisory committee of 30 current Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors who plan and deliver four performance day camps, using content from the *aMuse* Journey, targeted to girls in underserved areas of the council. As a result, those areas have a combined total of 210 new Junior girl members and 16 new adult volunteers; 92 percent of the girls at camp also signed up for other opportunities during the year.

Where to Wear Award Pins



Thank You!

Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada is fortunate to have so many outstanding volunteers who share their time and talents with us. Every single day, our volunteers are making a difference in the lives of girls across northern Nevada and northeastern California. We want to make sure that our dedicated volunteers are recognized for their efforts. Your nomination and/or endorsement is helping us promote a culture of appreciation here at GSSN and impacts the retention of invaluable volunteers that make Girl Scouting happen.

Do you have questions about volunteer recognition or the awards nomination process? Contact our team at 775-322-0642 or girlscoutshelp@gssn.org.