



Service Unit Award Guide

Girl Scouts of Missouri Heartland values you--our adult members and volunteers-- for your dedication towards championing girl ambition! We want to show our support for your dedication and commitment by honoring you, and celebrating you when you exceed expectations. Volunteer appreciation goes beyond a simple thank you. Our volunteers devote time and energy on top of their own busy lives to give girls the opportunity to learn, have fun and grow in a positive, supportive environment. This guide details the various ways we can express our appreciation and honor their service.

Volunteers and staff across departments and geographic areas are encouraged to nominate award-worthy adults for GSUSA and GSMH Awards and are encouraged to hold service unit recognitions in their local areas. Detailed descriptions of suggested Service Unit awards, as well as nominating instructions and proper forms or links to forms are included in this guide. We have also included instructions and tips on how to host the best local awards ceremony possible!

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All awards are for service provided in the previous membership year(s).

Service Unit Awards

GSMH has designed these suggested awards to honor common areas of excellence in most Service Units. We can provide a printed or digital file with certificates for these awards if notified within 4 weeks of a planned local recognition ceremony. Learn more about certificate requests in the next few pages!

Service Unit Guiding Star

The Service Unit Guiding Star Award recognizes a volunteer who provides outstanding, continuous mentorship to others. The volunteer shares knowledge, tips, and is readily available to help new volunteers.

Service Unit Helping Hand

The Service Unit Helping Hand Award recognizes a volunteer who has exhibited exemplary leadership and community service during the last membership year. This volunteer leads girls to make exceptional contributions to their community. They are a shining example of Girl Scout's values of leadership, service, community, and volunteerism.

Service Unit Outdoor Enthusiast

The Service Unit Outdoor Enthusiast Award recognizes a volunteer who has provided outstanding service that furthers outdoor education for girls and/or adults, performed at a level that exceeded expectations, and completed an exceptional number of outdoor activities.

Service Unit Outstanding Leader

The Service Unit Outstanding Leader Award recognizes a volunteer for service beyond the expectations for the position and will be presented by the service unit team.

Service Unit Outstanding Volunteer

The Service Unit Outstanding Volunteer Award recognizes a volunteer for service beyond the expectations of the position.

Create Your Own Local Awards

Any number of things deserve recognition at the local and service unit level! Have a volunteer that really excels at keeping things girl-led? Honor this with a "Service Unit Most Girl-Led Troop" Award. Have one that does a great job with Fall Product Program? Why not give a "Fall Product All-Star" Award? Have a great Girl Scout Dad? Help honor him with a "Man Enough to be a Girl Scout" Award!

Need help brainstorming local awards to honor your great local volunteers? Reach out to your Volunteer Support Specialist! We'll be happy to help!

GSMH Service Unit Awards: How to Nominate

Each service unit has their own process to honor local volunteers. Please reach out to your service unit or Volunteer Support Staff member for more information about your specific area.

1. Service Unit volunteers should submit the [Service Unit Award Certificate Request Form](#) no later than four weeks before the planned service unit recognition ceremony. Certificates can be requested for these awards at any time within the calendar year, however they should be for service provided in the previous membership year(s).
2. The Volunteer Support Specialist will review the certificate request and will contact you for more information on your local recognition ceremony if necessary. They will get the requested certificates to your service unit with plenty of time to celebrate with you.

Service Unit Guiding Star Award

Description

The Service Unit Guiding Star Award recognizes a volunteer who provides outstanding, continuous mentorship to others. The volunteer shares knowledge, tips, and is readily available to help new volunteers.

Criteria

- The candidate is an active, approved adult member registered with Girl Scouts of the USA.
- The candidate has completed the required training for their position.
- The candidate continually provides support to new volunteers by sharing their skills and knowledge.

Service Unit Helping Hand Award

Description

The Service Unit Helping Hand Award recognizes a volunteer who has exhibited exemplary leadership and community service during the last membership year. This volunteer leads girls to make exceptional contributions to their community. They are a shining example of Girl Scout's values of leadership, service, community, and volunteerism.

Criteria

- The candidate is an active, approved adult member registered with Girl Scouts of the USA.
- The candidate has completed the required training for their position.
- The candidate has demonstrated their leadership skills by guiding girls' service commitment with Girl Scouts in their community.

Service Unit Outdoor Enthusiast Award

Description

The Service Unit Outdoor Enthusiast Award recognizes a volunteer who has provided outstanding service that furthers outdoor education for girls and/or adults, performed at a level that exceeded expectations, and completed an exceptional number of outdoor activities.

Criteria

- The candidate is an active, approved adult member registered with Girl Scouts of the USA.
- The candidate has completed the required training for their position.
- The candidate's performance has exceeded position expectations by delivering exceptional outdoor program experience and supporting the council's mission delivery goals.

Service Unit Outstanding Leader Award

Description

The Service Unit Outstanding Leader Award recognizes a volunteer for service beyond the expectations for a troop leadership position.

Criteria

- The candidate is a registered troop leader, assistant leader, co-leader, or advisor of Girl Scouts.
- Has completed all required GSMH trainings for their role.
- Performed with demonstrated competence in at least two of the following areas:
 - Involved adults in the community to help broaden the program opportunities for girls
 - Increased girl membership to support the council membership goal
 - Used the three keys to leadership (discover, connect, and take action) to select a wide range of program activities with girls
 - Helped girls recognize, understand, and practice the values of inclusive behavior

Service Unit Outstanding Volunteer Award

Description

The Service Unit Outstanding Volunteer Award recognizes a volunteer for service beyond the expectations of the position.

Criteria

- The candidate is an active, registered Girl Scout adult in a capacity other than troop leader, assistant leader, co-leader, or advisor.
- Has received appropriate training for the position held or has equivalent experience.
- Performed service that exceeded the expectations of the position held in one or more of the following areas:
 - Membership
 - Program
 - Resource development
 - Pluralism
 - Marketing and communications
 - Strategic leadership/governance
 - Human resources
- Actively recognized, understood, and practiced the values of inclusive behavior.

Recognizing Your Service Unit's Volunteers

How to Plan an Adult Recognition Ceremony

Planning your local area's adult recognition event can be a fun experience for everyone! Develop this event as your service unit sees fit and create a memorable experience. Some service units add an adult recognition ceremony to their Service Unit Bridging Ceremony and others have a specific night set aside for volunteers. Some even forgo the ceremony and just have a fun event for the volunteers to socialize, catch up, and celebrate their sisterhood.

Tip #1: Start with the Basics

Who is attending?

Your audience should include everyone who would like to join and honor the volunteers in your area! This can mean girls and adults, or just adults. Consider inviting local community members and community partners who have had a great impact on the local service unit.

What will we be doing? What is the theme?

Everyone loves a good theme! Whether you'd like to have a more formal recognition night or do a simple activity as a group, the possibilities are endless! For example, one large service unit may host a formal recognition night to honor all their local volunteers. Their neighbor, who is a smaller service unit, does a bowling night each year to honor their volunteers and have a little fun together. Others may tie their adult recognition into their May Service Unit Meeting. In short, do what works best for you and your service unit.

When will it be held?

Most service units honor local volunteers for their contributions each year in late April, May, or early June. Remember the summer is often busy, so later than June isn't ideal, but you could also honor volunteers from the previous year at the start of the next one! Nothing like a little gratitude to start the year off right.

Where will it be?

While your regular meeting space may be the best option, look for other options as well. Would it be fun to have a dinner at a leader's home or local restaurant? Perhaps a BBQ at a local park for volunteers, their families, and entire troops? The possibilities are endless!

Why are we holding this ceremony? What are our goals?

To hold a successful Service Unit Adult Recognition Ceremony, you must be clear on your goal. Is it to honor the volunteers who worked hard the previous year and to have a little fun together? Or is it to speak to the larger local community about the impact Girl Scout volunteers have on local girls and families? Maybe it is a combination of all of these and more. Whatever your goal, make sure it's clear in the recognition process. This will help guide your service unit to success.

Tip #2: Make it Your Own with Custom Awards

Creating Custom Awards can be a fun experience for your whole Service Unit! You can create nearly any custom award for your area. They can honor an entire troop's volunteers, or individuals. Here are some examples:

- Service Unit Most Girl-Led Troop—for the troop that most assisted girls in planning and implementing their year.
- Service Unit Money Maker—for the volunteer and troop who earned the most in product programs the previous year!
- Service Unit Best Event/Experience—for the troop volunteers who planned and led the best troop experience the previous year.
- Man Enough to be a Girl Scout—for the Girl Scout dad that's always helping out!
- Service Unit Finance All-Star—for the Girl Scout volunteer that keeps all the finances in order and every cent accounted for!

Keep an eye out for great champions each year in your service unit! These people and successes can be the beginning of a great award for your area. In the end, great volunteers deserve to be acknowledged for all their strengths! Don't forget to reach out to your area's Volunteer Support Specialist, they may have ideas for great volunteers and custom awards as well!

Tips for Writing Nominations

Adult Recognition Awards: It's about the girls! The focus of all adult recognition awards is the positive impact that adults have had on girls and the Girl Scout Movement. Writing a strong nomination and endorsement is an important step to ensure that our adults are celebrated for the passion and commitment they show for Girl Scouting. This chart shows how a statement can become a strong nomination statement.

Initial Statement	Thoughtfully Consider	Strong Nomination Statement
"She has been a leader for a long time."	How many years? Through which levels?	"For 11 years, she has led a large troop from Daisies, persevering through the difficult middle school years, to their current level of Seniors."
"She is a great leader."	What kind of leadership qualities does she bring? What makes her stand out?	"She continually brings leadership opportunities to the girls. She encourages a girl-led approach by allowing girls to vote on and implement their activities."
"She always goes above and beyond."	Be specific! Tell a story about the great benefits those around her receive due to her efforts.	"Her troop voted to start the aMuse Journey. Because she has never considered herself a "creative soul" when it came to artistic endeavors, she recruited troop parents, artists, and actors as resources for her 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 because of these connections."
"He's a dad who helps whenever needed."	Be specific! Tell a story about the support given to girls, and how the girls benefitted.	"This good guy came to the rescue during a troop camp-out when the troops discovered a nest of baby rattlesnakes in the camp! He kept both the girls and leaders calm and assisted in striking camp, all the while educating the girls about the snakes and safety. The girls felt safe, and in control, thanks to the good guidance from an awesome Girl Scout dad!"

Adult Recognitions Frequently Asked Questions

How often are adult recognitions presented?

Formal presentation of GSUSA Awards, GSMH Awards, Community Awards, and Years of Service Awards are presented each year at an annual recognition ceremony. Service units may present local awards at any time and are encouraged to recognize volunteers informally throughout the year. Please see the Service Unit Award Guide for more information.

Who can nominate?

Nominations for awards can be made by any person who has knowledge of the service performed. This includes parents, community members, volunteers, and staff. Please look at the descriptions of each type of award above for more information on who can nominate for specific awards!

What is the difference between the Numeral Guard and Years of Service?

The Numeral Guard is for the number of years a person has been a member of the Girl Scout organization, including years as a girl member. It is available for purchase by individuals and troops at any Girl Scout store or the council online store.

The Years of Service Award is given for the number of years of volunteer service as an active, registered adult member. Volunteers with 25 or more years of service, whose names are submitted on the *Years of Service Form* by the deadline, will be recognized at the GSMH volunteer recognition ceremony. Service units can recognize volunteers locally for five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years of service. Year of Service pins can be ordered through the retail store for the years below 25 years of service.

When do I need to have the nomination paperwork turned in, and who gets it?

Please look at the award description form for the specific dates the nomination is due.

- All GSUSA nomination and endorsement forms are to be submitted via email to info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org by February 1.
- GSMH nomination forms and endorsement forms, Years of Service forms, Juliette Low Community Partnership Award nomination forms, and President's Award Nomination Forms are to be submitted via linked online forms by February 1.
- Once submitted, all awards go through a review and approval process by our Volunteer Awards Committee, Council Leadership Team, and in some cases, Board of Directors. The approval process does take some time. If you have questions about that process, please reach out to your Volunteer Support Specialist.

Can staff be nominated for an award?

No. These awards are for volunteer members only.

I nominated someone last year and they didn't receive an award. Why should I do it again?

We're so sorry that your nominated adult didn't receive the award they were nominated for last year! Our goal is to honor as many volunteers as possible at the annual recognition ceremony, and we regret that they weren't there!

Often when adults are nominated but don't earn awards, it is due to a lack of endorsements for the award they've been nominated for, or unclear information on the nomination form that we can't resolve before the deadline. You can help prevent this by reading the nomination criteria

closely, making sure the proper number of endorsements are submitted, and letting us know when you have questions during the nomination process. We're happy to walk you through it!

We know all our adults deserve recognition for how hard they work to support girl ambition! If we missed someone last year--let us know! We'll see what we can do to make sure they get the recognition they've earned!

If I have other questions, who should I ask?

Contact your Volunteer Support Specialist or New Leader Specialist with any questions you have that this guide does not address.