

# Service Unit Level Awards

# Purpose of Recognition

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, but most volunteers want to do a good job and to make a positive difference. When volunteers know their time and energy are appreciated and that we all value them, they commit themselves to Girl Scouts. They want to know their service is helping the greater good, making the world a better place. That means our recognition is one of the most powerful ways we can retain the invaluable women and men who volunteer for Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Three Keys to successfully recognizing volunteers:

- ◆ 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 toward the Girl Scout Mission feels respected and valued for her or his service and contribution. Remember the concept of Ubuntu: “I am me because we are we”

**We create that type of culture** by identifying means of recognition, tools and resources we can use for recognition, and collaboration between staff and volunteers to recognize all of our good work. Consider how your recognition efforts affect those around you.

**An ideal volunteer recognition system** includes a mixture of informal and formal methods to acknowledge all accomplishments, regardless of role or length of service. These methods also meet a wide variety of personal preferences. When thinking of ways to thank volunteers, ask “What can GSEP or our Service Unit do to show appreciation in a meaningful way to this person?”

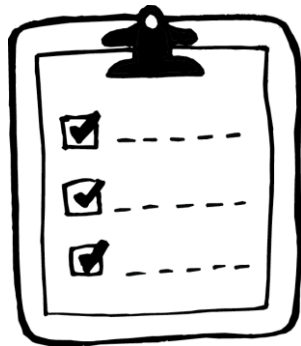
**Successful recognition includes:** inclusiveness, accessibility, and consistency. Thanking a volunteer at the end of a project or the GS year also offers the opportunity to encourage participation in the same role or other opportunities coming up. However, please remember to show appreciation in appropriate ways throughout a person’s participation and not only at the end.

# Formal Recognition Considerations

## Best Practices

The desire to recognize all dedicated volunteers must be balanced with an obligation to preserve the value of the recognition. It is recommended that there be a minimum of 2 years between awards of an individual. Consider using informal recognitions between awards to encourage great volunteers to continue serving while they grow in the Girl Scout organization.

Acceptance of any position, whether done on a paid or volunteer basis, implies a willingness to perform duties stated in the position description and to devote the time necessary to perform those duties under normal circumstances. Therefore, while doing a "good job" and putting in many hours is certainly worth thanks, it does not necessarily indicate performance "above and beyond the expectations" of the position.



## Choosing the Right Award

Occasionally, a candidate's outstanding service meets the criteria for more than one award. In this case, one should consider which award might be more meaningful to the recipient. For example, an active volunteer who has made great contributions at both the local Service Unit and Council levels might be a candidate for either the Honor Pin or the Gertrude K. McGonigle Award. If the person were relocating, the Gertrude K. McGonigle Award, which is specific to this council, might be the recipient's preference since it would be conceivable that the person might be recognized with the Honor Pin in another area at a future time.

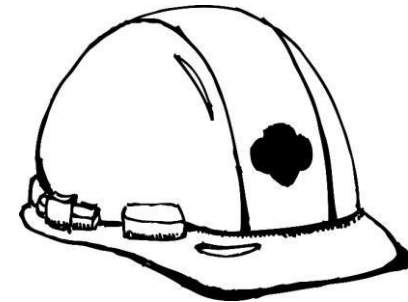


## **Focus of Service**

Focus refers to the areas or groups benefiting from the service. In many cases, a volunteer works with a troop/group, coordinates Service Unit events, and/or participates on a council-wide committee or task group. To help determine which award is appropriate, review award descriptions and criteria on pages 10-24.

## **Impact of Service**

When you consider impact, consider both the number of years in a position and the results of a person's service. Length of time in a position, while always deserving of appreciation, does not necessarily justify an official award. The results of service are more important than length of service, but often it takes some time in a position before the person can achieve truly outstanding results.



# Formal Awards Presented at the Service Unit Level

[Return to Contents](#)



## **VOLUNTEER OF EXCELLENCE-** A GSUSA award

Volunteer of Excellence Award recognizes a volunteer who has contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with girls in any pathway to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

### **Additional Criteria:**

- I. The candidate is an active, registered Girl Scout member.
- II. The candidate has contributed outstanding service in support of the council's mission-delivery goals in one or more of the following areas: Membership Development/Community Cultivation, Volunteer Relations and Support, Program, Leadership and Governance, Fund Development, and Council Support Service to girl and adult members.
- III. The service performed is above and beyond the expectations for the position held.
- IV. The candidate actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behaviors.

**Nomination:** Submit nomination form plus **two** endorsement letters. The nomination should be submitted to the Service Unit Recognitions Coordinator.

## **FRIEND OF GIRL SCOUTING SERVICE UNIT-** A GSUSA award

The Friend of Girl Scouting Service Unit Award recognizes groups, community members, or individuals who have supported Girl Scouting in the community by offering meeting space, troop sponsorship, storage facilities, or another token of support.

### **Additional Criteria:**

- I. The recipient does not need to be a registered Girl Scout.
- II. The service performed by the candidate is above and beyond the expectations for the business or organization.

**Nomination:** Submit nomination form plus **two** endorsement letters. The nomination should be submitted to the Service Unit Recognitions Coordinator.





## THE NUMERAL GUARD

a GSUSA award

**5-30 years**



## THE YEARS OF SERVICE PIN

a GSUSA award

**5-20 years**

### Description:

The Years of Service Pin is a longevity recognition for an adult volunteer's dedication to Girl Scouting.

- *Years do not need to be consecutive*
- *Pins are available in five-year increments*
- *Form required for adults only. To purchase pins for girls, contact any GSEP Retail Shop.*
- *Individuals track their total years and work with their service unit to receive their pin(s)*

## Instructions

1. Complete all Requester Information fields in the [request form](#).
  1. This can be completed by the Service Unit Manager or Service Unit Recognitions Coordinator.
2. Complete the Pins Requested fields
  - a. Enter the number of individuals who should receive each pin (enter 0 where appropriate)
  - b. Enter the names of all individuals who should receive each pin (ex. Sally Smith- Ambler, PA; Betty Jones, Ambler, PA)
3. Click "Submit"
4. Go to any local GSEP Retail Shop. Reference this request with the shop associate to purchase the pins
5. GSEP staff will add pin information to individuals' records



# How to Write a Great Nomination or Endorsement

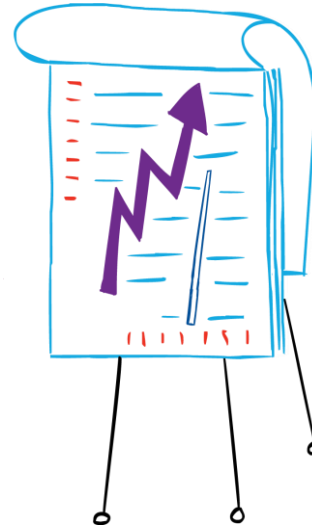
**1. Be Specific-** If the form asks you to describe a service provided that meets the qualifications of the award, be very descriptive.

*Uninformative Example:*

o Lisa Leadsalot should receive the award because she is always organized and is great with parent volunteers. We are all very fond of her and are willing to be under her leadership.

*Informative Example:*

✓ Lisa Leadsalot should receive the award because she is a great example of adult volunteer leadership to both girls and adults. Under the wing of her leadership 10 parents are actively volunteering with troop functions. She recently delegated event preparation details to us while she was out of town for a few weeks. Lisa is always paying thanks to our support to the troop. When she came back from her trip, she paid thanks to us at the Service Unit meeting. She organized a potluck in recognition of her troop volunteers who provide her with endless support.



**2. Show Results-** What is the impact? How is the service measurable?

*Uninformative Example:*

o Tonya Trainer provided an excellent training to our volunteers.

*Informative Example:*

✓ Tonya Trainer not only provided excellent First Aid training to the volunteers in the area, but she also filled in when she was called upon last minute when the assigned trainer became ill. Because of her volunteer service, 20 new recruits had a chance to become certified in First Aid and CPR.

**3. Avoid using only “feel good” statements-** Provide concrete facts rather than opinions.

*Uninformative Example:*

o Susie Sales is really good with cookies with her Cadette troop. When she took over as Service Unit Cookie Manager when the previous volunteer resigned, it was a successful sale.

*Informative Example:*

✓ When the Service Unit Cookie Manager resigned, Suzie Sales volunteered to help. She has worked with the cookies for several years and was able to adapt to the service unit. She processed 19,000 boxes of cookies without any errors. Through skillful management techniques, her service unit achieved 100% troop participation, and increased cookie sales by 40%.

# Frequently Asked Questions

[Return to Appendix](#)

**Q: We worry that if we give out too many recognitions, their significance will be "watered down." How do we Maintain Quality?**

**A:** We should celebrate having growing numbers of people who deserve recognition. Take pride in having many to recognize. Girl Scout adult recognitions are not a competition. There should be no limit on the number of awards given.

**Q: What about recognizing people more than once. Should you give the same recognition to a person more than once?**

**A:** It is great to celebrate people whose continuing service and commitment make a difference in Girl Scouting. Rather than giving a duplicate award, consider personalizing a certificate, gift or service. This would be appropriate when someone deserves repeated recognition at the same level, for example, as an Appreciation or Honor Pin recipient.

**Q: How does a person decide which recognition to wear?**

**A:** If an adult has received more than one special recognition (e.g., Volunteer of Excellence & Appreciation pins), typically the highest award received is the one worn on the uniform. People with numerous pins usually retire the remaining ones with honor, either placing them in a scrapbook, framing together with other mementos. Retired awards may still be worn.

**Q: If a nomination requires three or four endorsement letters can one letter be duplicated and submitted by other people?**

**A:** Each individual who writes a letter of endorsement should give her/his own account of the significant contributions of the specific candidate. Simply utilizing copy and paste to reuse an endorsement for multiple candidates takes the sincerity out of the letter and may give the committee cause to question if the candidate's service is deserving of the formal recognition.

**Q: Is there a hierarchy for the awards?**

**A:** We recognize that volunteers do amazing work and should be recognized when that work occurs. A volunteer can earn any award at any time\*, as long as they meet the criteria outlined for the award. However, we recommend that the awards are built upon, like we scaffold for the girls. For example, we might suggest the Volunteer of Excellence at the service unit level first, then the Rising Star award, and so on. (\*The only exception is the Thanks Badge II, which requires the candidate to have previously earned the Thanks Badge.

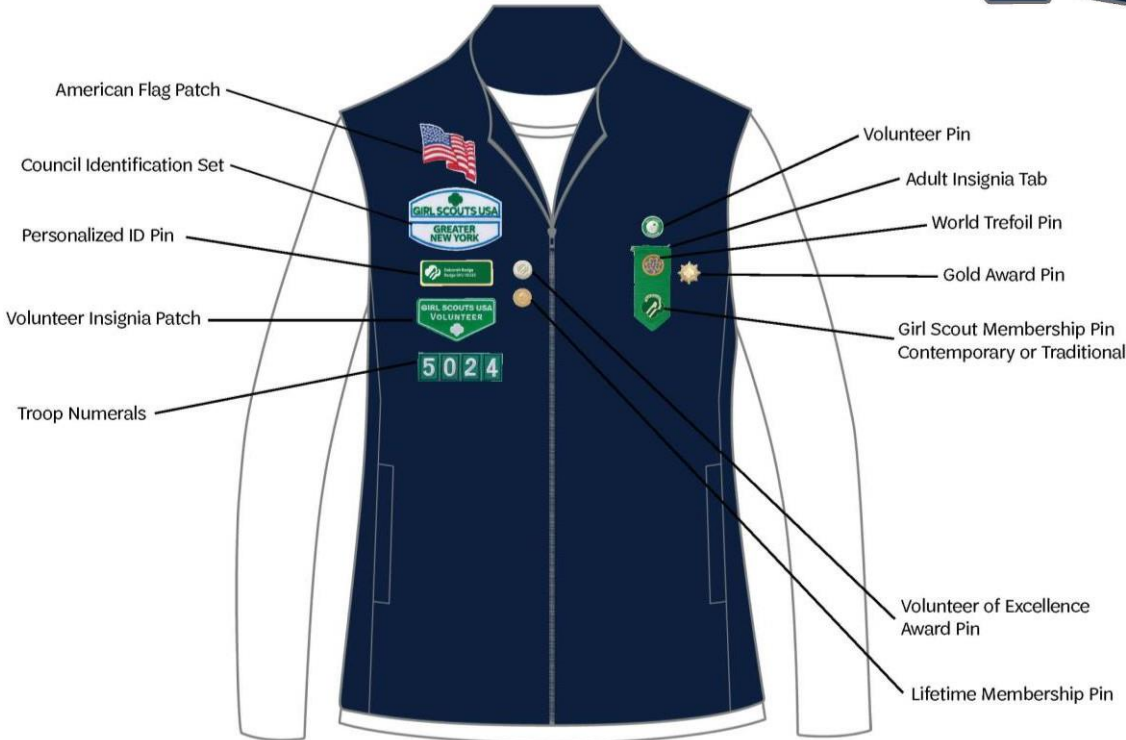
**Q: What is a "service area"?**

**A:** A service area refers to the areas in which a volunteer has an impact.

1. Community- The volunteer's local community/vicinity
2. Service Unit- The cluster of troops within a defined area, such as a school district
3. Council- the entire 9 county footprint of lower southeastern Pennsylvania



# Guide to Insignia Placement



**\*Please note: You will only wear your pins on a blazer or sweater (no patches).**