

# Volunteer Recognition Handbook



**girl scouts**   
of michigan  
shore to shore

# GSUSA Volunteer Awards Fact Sheet & Requirements

## Volunteer of Excellence



Does the volunteer give service exclusively at the troop level?

The Volunteer of Excellence award recognizes volunteers who have contributed outstanding service in support of mission-delivery to girl and adult members at a **troop level**.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer who has successfully completed a term of service and all requirements for the position beyond expectations.
- The nominee actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires the Nomination Form and one Letter of Endorsement from someone other than the nominator indicating how the nominee meets the criteria of the award.

## Appreciation Pin



Does the volunteer give service benefiting a single service unit?

The Appreciation Pin recognizes an active Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had a measurable impact on **one service unit**, helps reach and surpass the mission-delivery goals of the area.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer who has successfully completed a term of service and all requirements for the position beyond expectations.
- The nominee has made an impact on one service unit within the council's jurisdiction.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires the Nomination Form and two Letters of Endorsement from people other than the nominator indicating how the nominee meets the criteria of the award.

## Honor Pin



Does the volunteer give service benefiting two or more service units?

The Honor Pin recognizes an active Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, which has had measurable impact on **two or more service units**, allowing GSMISTS to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer who has successfully completed a term of service and all requirements for the position beyond expectations.
- The nominee has made an impact on two or more service units within the council's jurisdiction.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires the Nomination Form and two Letters of Endorsement from people other than the nominator indicating how the nominee meets the criteria of the award. A Letter of Endorsement is required from each service unit served.

## Thanks Badge



Does the volunteer give outstanding service benefiting all of GSMISTS or Girl Scout Movement?

The Thanks Badge honors an active Girl Scout volunteer whose ongoing commitment, leadership, and service have had an exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of **GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout Movement**.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer who has successfully completed a term of service and all requirements for the position beyond expectations.
- The outstanding service performed by the nominee resulted in outcomes that benefited the entirety of GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout organization and is so significantly above and beyond the call of duty that no other award would be appropriate.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires the Nomination Form and three Letters of Endorsement from people other than the nominator indicating how the nominee meets the criteria of the award.

## Thanks Badge II



Has the volunteer received the Thanks Badge and continues to give outstanding service benefiting all of GSMISTS or the Girl Scout Movement?

The Thanks Badge II recognizes a previous Thanks Badge recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role significantly above and beyond the call of duty, resulting in a measurable impact that benefits **GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout Movement**.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer who has successfully completed a term of service and all requirements for the position beyond expectations.
- The nominee has received the Thanks Badge.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires the Nomination Form and three Letters of Endorsement from people other than the nominator indicating how the nominee meets the criteria of the award.

## President's Award



Is the award for a team or committee?

The President's Award recognizes the efforts of a team or committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience surpassed team goals and resulted in significant, measurable impact toward reaching GSMISTS overall goals.

### Requirements:

- All team or committee members are active, registered Girl Scout volunteers who have successfully completed a term of service and all requirements for the position beyond expectations.
- The team or committee has significantly contributed to one or more of the council's mission-delivery goals.
- The team or committee reflects the diversity of the target audience or area it serves.
- The team or committee actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires the Nomination Form and two Letters of Endorsement from people other than the nominator indicating how the team or committee meets the criteria of the award.

## Years of Girl Scout Membership

Does the volunteer have a total of 50 years or more of Girl Scout Membership?

Volunteers who have been registered members for 50 years and higher (girl and adult years combined, in five year increments) will be recognized at the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony.

There is no charge for the pin if ordered by February 1st. Pins can be purchased through the GSMISTS Shop if the February 1<sup>st</sup> order deadline is not met.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer with a combined membership of 50 years or more.

Submit request for pin(s) by clicking [HERE](#)



## Years of Volunteer Service in Girl Scouting

Does the volunteer have five years of volunteer service or more?



Volunteers who have given five years of volunteer service or more (5 year increments) to Girl Scouts will be recognized at the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony.

There is no charge for the pin if ordered by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Pins can be purchased through the GSMISTS Shop if the February 1<sup>st</sup> order deadline is not met.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer with a minimum five years or more of volunteer service.

Submit request for pin(s) by clicking [HERE](#)

# GSMISTS Volunteer Recognition

## The Green Angel Pin

Presented to **one volunteer** who has greatly supported the Service Unit Director or Service Unit Team. The Service Unit Director or Service Unit Team selects the Green Angel recipient. If the Service Unit does not have a Director or Team the Community Membership Manager can select a Green Angel recipient.

Each Service Unit awards one Green Angel each year. A volunteer **should not** receive the Green Angel in consecutive years. The Service Unit will present this award at their local end of year celebration.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer.

Submit request for Green Angel by clicking [HERE](#)

## Volunteer of the Month

Presented to one volunteer who demonstrates a growth mindset, exceeds expectations and is a team player. Nominations for Volunteer of the Month can come from fellow volunteers, parents or Girl Scouts. This recognition will be featured on GSMISTS social media and the recipient will receive a certificate.

### Requirements:

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer who meets the Volunteer of the Month criteria.
- The nominee has a valid registration and background check.

### Nomination Process:

- Requires filling out the Volunteer of the Month Jotform which can come from fellow volunteers, parents or Girl Scouts.

Click [HERE](#) for the Volunteer of the Month Jotform

“To be inspired is great, but to be an inspiration is an honor.”

*Juliette Gordon Low,  
Founder of GSUSA*



# Volunteer Award Reminders

- The GSUSA Volunteer Awards **are not** built upon each other. A volunteer does not need to receive the Volunteer of Excellence Award before they receive the Honor Pin.

Each award focuses on providing outstanding service to different groups.

- **Volunteer of Excellence:** Outstanding service benefiting a Troop.
  - **Appreciation Pin:** Outstanding service benefiting one Service Unit.
  - **Honor Pin:** Outstanding service benefiting two or more Service Units.
  - **Thanks Badge:** Outstanding service benefiting GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout Movement.
  - **Thanks Badge II:** Volunteer has received the Thanks Badge and continues to provide outstanding service benefiting GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout Movement.
  - **President's Award:** Outstanding service provided by a team or committee.
- Nominations for Volunteer Recognition should be for the **last complete** membership year. For example, if you are submitting a volunteer to be recognized at the 2026 Volunteer Recognition Ceremony the volunteer's service must have occurred in October 2024-September 2025.
  - At least three years should pass in between receiving GSUSA Volunteer Awards.

For example, if a volunteer receives the Volunteer of Excellence award in 2025 at least three years\* should pass before she/he is eligible to be nominated for another GSUSA Volunteer Award.

*\*The GSMISTS Recognitions Committee reserves the right to allow for less time to pass under extenuating circumstances.*

- Volunteers may only earn a GSUSA Volunteer Award one time unless they have moved councils. For example, if a volunteer received the Honor Pin for their service in a different council, she/he may also receive the Honor Pin for her/his service in GSMISTS.



# Nomination Process

GSMISTS Volunteer Recognition nominations are accepted **online**.

Nominations can be submitted by clicking [HERE](#)

All the required information for a nomination must be entered into the Nomination Form in one sitting, including uploading the Letter(s) of Endorsement. The form **cannot be** started and saved.

Each GSUSA Volunteer Award requires a complete Nomination Form and Letter(s) of Endorsement (varies from one to three Letters of Endorsement depending on the award). The nominator who completed the Nomination Form may not write a Letter of Endorsement as well.



- When completing a Nomination Form or writing a Letter of Endorsement, remember GSUSA Volunteer Awards are awarded for service within the Girl Scout organization. They are not awarded for outside service in a volunteer's community or for service already recognized by GSMISTS or GSUSA.

## Deadline

All GSMISTS Volunteer Recognition submissions must be received by February 1<sup>st</sup>, fully completed. No late or partial submissions will be accepted.

## Committee information

GSMISTS Volunteer Recognition Committee is comprised of volunteers who review submissions for GSUSA Volunteer Awards. All submissions that are complete, submitted on time, and fulfill the requirements of the award are put forth for approval by GSMISTS Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please contact [customer care@gsmists.org](mailto:customer care@gsmists.org).

# Being Prepared

Before starting your nomination, it's a good idea to understand what's expected. Each award has its own set of criteria, and to help you craft a strong nomination, we've provided sample questions tailored to each one.

## Why Review Sample Questions?

- **Clarify What's Needed:** Understand the type of information you'll be asked to provide.
- **Stay Focused:** Align your responses with the award's core values and objectives.
- **Save Time:** Know what to prepare in advance—such as examples or Letters of Endorsement—before you begin the official nomination.

## **Volunteer of Excellence Nomination**

*Service Impacted: Troop Level*

- Give two examples of how the nominee has gone beyond expectations.
- Give two examples of how the nominee contributed outstanding service to the TROOP.
- Give two examples of how the nominee practiced inclusive behavior.
- One Letter of Endorsement is required.

## **Appreciation Pin Nomination**

*Service Impacted: One Service Unit*

- Identify one Service Unit impacted.
- Give two examples of how the nominee gave exemplary service to the Service Unit.
- Give two examples of how the nominee provided a measurable impact in the Service Unit. Each example should include details of the event, activity, program, etc. Estimate the number of girls reached and the impact the nominator saw with the girls. Provide as much detail as possible to show the impact the nominee had on the Service Unit.
- Give two examples of how the nominee practiced inclusive behavior.
- Two Letters of Endorsement are required.

## **Honor Pin Nomination**

*Service Impacted: Two or more Service Units*

- Identify at least two Service Units impacted.
- Give two examples of how the nominee has gone beyond expectations.
- Give two examples of how the nominee contributed outstanding service to two or more Service Units.
- Give two examples of how the nominee practiced inclusive behavior.
- Two Letters of Endorsement are required.

## **Thanks Badge | Thanks Badge II Nomination**

*Service Impacted: GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout Movement*

- Give two examples of how the nominee went above expectations.
- Give two examples of how the nominee's outstanding service provided a measurable impact on GSMISTS or the entire Girl Scout Movement. Each example should include details of the event, activity, program, etc. Estimate the number of girls reached and the impact the nominator saw with the girls. Provide as much detail as possible to show the impact the nominee had.
- Give two examples of how the nominee practiced inclusive behavior.
- Three Letters of Endorsement are required.

## **President's Award Nomination**

- Give two examples of how the team or committee has gone beyond expectations.
- Give two examples of how the team or committee has significantly contributed to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Give two examples of how the team or committee reflected the diversity of the target audience or area it serves.
- Give two examples of how the team or committee recognized, understood, and practiced the values of inclusive behavior.
- Two Letters of Endorsement are required.



# Nomination Do's and Don'ts

## DO

- Nominate a person for only one award. Check the list of previous awardees to see if the volunteer has earned an award. The list can be found [HERE](#).
- Nominate someone who you feel deserves recognition for their service to Girl Scouts and meets all of the requirements of the award.
- Nominate someone you know and have worked with in Girl Scouts.
- Fill out the entire Nomination Form. Take the opportunity to share what the nominee has done that is above and beyond their position description.
- Focus on what the nominee has done for Girl Scouts on the Nomination Form and Letter(s) of Endorsement.
- Ask people like girls, parents, or fellow troop leaders to write the Letter(s) of Endorsement. Make sure you submit the required number of letters.
- Ensure the Nomination Form and Letter(s) of Endorsement are submitted [HERE](#) by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

## DON'T

- Nominate someone who has received an award in the last three years.
- Nominate someone who does not meet all the requirements of the award.
- Nominate someone you do not know.
- Leave questions on the Nomination Form blank.
- Include information about what the nominee does for other organizations or for her/his family, etc.
- Wait until the last minute to ask for Letter(s) of Endorsement.
- Submit the same Letter of Endorsement for different people within a Service Unit or Troop.
- Submit a Nomination Form and the Letter(s) of Endorsement separately and/or after February 1<sup>st</sup>.

# Writing a Letter of Endorsement

## Be specific

- Do not assume the GSMISTS Volunteer Recognition Committee knows what position the nominee holds or what it requires. Use detail to describe the position the nominee holds within Girl Scouts and why they deserve the recognition. For example, if the nominee held an event, what was it and what was necessary to make it happen.

## Keep it brief

- A Letter of Endorsement does not need to be six pages to be effective. It needs to be a minimum of one page and a maximum of two pages.

## Make sure it's relevant

- Check the award requirements and description to make sure you are nominating the right person for the right award. Your Letter of Endorsement must speak to the qualifications and achievements the award honors. Do not include all the wonderful things the nominee does outside of Girl Scouting in the letter.

## Write what you know

- You should only write a Letter of Endorsement for a person you know and have worked with personally. Only write about event(s) or attribute(s) you have personally witnessed.

## Do not just make a list

- It is easy to just list the job description of a position but what did the candidate do that went above and beyond the normal job? How did they make an impact? Why do they deserve this special honor?

## Proofread

- It is important your Letter of Endorsement makes sense and can be read clearly by the GSMISTS Volunteer Recognition Committee. Take a moment to proofread and check for errors before submitting.

## Coordinate

- Make sure you are communicating with the nominator and other endorsers. All the required information for a nomination must be entered into the Nomination Form in one sitting, including uploading the Letter(s) of Endorsement. The form cannot be started and saved.

## Be on time

- Do not wait until the last minute. Late submissions **will not** be accepted.



# Example Endorsement Letter

A Letter of Endorsement must be specific, measurable, and results oriented. The letter should resemble the following outline:

The opening paragraph should introduce the purpose of the letter, the nominee being nominated, the award they are being nominated for, and the reason for the nomination. Here is an example:

**Introduction of candidate and brief description of service.**

I am writing this letter to support Jane Doe, Service Unit Director for Service Unit 700, for the Honor Pin. Jane has worked diligently in the Any Town area to provide quality leadership, support, and training to the volunteers in her area, which resulted in more trained leaders, an increase in girl members and an increase in the number of troops.

The body of the letter should describe the specific service, who benefited from the service, and provide clear results of the service that was above and beyond the volunteer position description. For example:

**Description of service or action that was above the volunteer position description.**

Jane recognized that many of our leaders were not getting their training due to time constraints. She realized that in our community many of the adults work in second or third shift jobs. This created a challenge when it came to training volunteers. She found out that several neighboring Service Units had the same problem. She called a meeting of the Service Unit Directors from neighboring areas to propose that they offer training at “unconventional times” due to their audience. The Service Units were immediately behind her. Jane’s next step was to contact the Volunteer Development department at the council office.

**“Above and Beyond” means the nominee has gone over the responsibilities and expectations of their volunteer position description.**

The Volunteer Development Manager put her in touch with some facilitators in her area to involve Jane in the next Facilitating Adult Learning Course. Working together with both volunteers and council staff, Jane orchestrated three training sessions that offered the courses needed by the volunteers. The amazing thing is they were offered at a local church from 6 to 9 a.m. when everyone was getting off of work. Jane worked with the Service Units and they provided the funds for breakfast so the volunteers felt appreciated as well.

**Results of the nominee’s work.**

Jane’s hard work resulted in 30 leaders in three Service Units being trained to work with their Troops. She showed leaders that with some collaboration things could get done. Jane’s work across three Service Units benefited over 200 girls and has created strong relationships with each of the Service Units. For her innovation in training across Service Units and her willingness to learn and to be trained as a Facilitator, Jane Doe deserves the Honor Pin.

The closing of the letter needs to include the writer’s name, service unit, address, phone number, and e-mail. Here is an example:

Sincerely, Juliette Low  
Service Unit 700  
1000 Main Street, Savannah, GA 10100  
800-555-1234 | jgl@gmail.com

# Stay Connected with GSMISTS

We're here for you! If you have any questions, need assistance, or just want to connect, please don't hesitate to reach out. Our dedicated team is committed to providing you with the support and information you need.

844-476-4787 | [customercare@gsmists.org](mailto:customercare@gsmists.org)

## Digital Newsletters

**In the Know:** A monthly newsletter sent to your e-mail or available on [gsmists.org](http://gsmists.org). In the Know is for troop leaders and service unit team members to stay informed on GSMISTS happenings and activities.

**Shore Shout Out:** A quarterly newsletter sent to your e-mail or available on [gsmists.org](http://gsmists.org). Shore Shout Out is for Girl Scout families to share GSMISTS happenings and activities.

### What's Inside?

- Membership Info
- Product Program
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Upcoming Events
- Ways to Support GSMISTS
- Shop Updates
- and more!

Want to be added to the e-mail list?  
Contact [communications@gmists.org](mailto:communications@gmists.org)

### Be Featured

Your troop or Girl Scouts in your service unit could be featured on our social media channels, or e-mail newsletters! Click [HERE](#) to share your adventure, project, or accomplishment!



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