

Girl Scout Volunteer Appreciation Awards Guidebook





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Introduction

Girl Scouts of Suffolk County is fortunate to have more than 2,500 Adult Volunteers. These volunteers give themselves, and their time, to the Girl Scout Movement, and, in turn, reap the reward of helping girls become the strong, confident leaders of tomorrow. Their dedication emphasizes the qualities that Girl Scouts value. Volunteer Appreciation Awards in Girl Scouting acknowledges those volunteers who provide service above and beyond what is expected.

The criteria for these awards are established by either GSUSA or Girl Scouts of Suffolk County Council and focus on leadership, implementation of goals, acceptance of responsibility, and consistent follow through. This guidebook will provide information on award criteria, nomination, and review processes.

Eligibility for Awards

Awards presented in 2025-2026 will celebrate volunteer contributions and years of service as of September 30, 2025, except for the following:

*The First Year Leader of Excellence Award (Service Unit Level) will celebrate volunteer contributions within their first year of service which may include the current Girl Scout Year 2025-2026.

*The Leader Legacy Award (Service Unit Level) will celebrate troop leader contributions and 10 years of consecutive service as of September 30, 2025, AND who have completed their final year of service in 2024-2025 or WILL complete their final year in 2025-2026.

In addition to specific award criteria, nominated candidates must meet the following eligibility requirements to receive recognition:

- Registered Girl Scout
- Active member of Girl Scouts of Suffolk County
- Volunteer in good standing as defined by Council and the Volunteer Expectations and Code of Conduct
- Nomination submitted by the deadline

Nomination Process

Any active Girl Scout member, Girl Scout's parent or caregiver, or alumna may nominate a volunteer for a Volunteer Appreciation Award. Each award has specific criteria for nominee eligibility and nominations must be received by the deadline for consideration.

The criteria for these awards are established either by GSUSA or GSSC and focus on leadership, implementation of goals, acceptance of responsibility, and consistent follow-through.

Writing Award Nominations

The focus of volunteer appreciation awards is impact on girls and the Girl Scout movement. The Volunteer Appreciation & Awards Committee, comprised of volunteers from throughout the Council, is committed to evaluating award submissions for the most prestigious awards a council may award to volunteers. The committee relies on the completeness and accuracy of the nominations. Please let the time you take to fill out the nomination or endorsement be thoughtful as you let us know the outstanding characteristics of the person you are nominating.

This chart shows how a statement, with a little thought, can become a strong nomination statement for the committee's review.

Initial Statement	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 as well as make sure they are knowledgeable about opportunities. Last month she had them vote on which badges they want to do for April and May and reviewed and introduced them to the new Leadership Awards via the website."
"She always goes above and beyond."	Be specific! Tell a story about the great benefits those around her receive due to her efforts.	"Susan never considered herself a "creative soul" when it came to artistic endeavors. When her girls showed interest in theatre, she recruited troop parents, artists, and actors as resources for her girls. She leaned on her resources to help plan a Theatre Day for her troop where they learned about making costumes and sets and participated in acting scenes they wrote and performed for each other. "
"He's a dad who helps whenever needed."	Be specific! Tell a story about the support given to the girls, and how the girls benefited.	"This volunteer came to the rescue during a troop camp-out when the troops discovered a nest of baby raccoons in camp! He kept both the girls and leaders calm as he assisted in alerting the site director, all the while educating the girls about wild animals and safety. The girls felt safe, and in control, thanks to good guidance!"

Volunteer Appreciation & Awards Ceremony

Council recognizes recipients of GSUSA National Recognition Awards and Council Level Awards at the Annual Meeting held in the spring. Award recipients will be notified of their award and ceremony details by Girl Scouts of Suffolk County.

Service Unit teams recognize recipients of Service Unit Level Awards at scheduled local events within their designated community. Award recipients will be notified of their award and ceremony or event details by their Service Unit team.





GSUSA National Recognition Awards

Deadline to submit these award nominations is January 31, 2026.

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
Appreciation Pin 	Any Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior while supporting the delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and making a measurable impact in at least one Service Unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
Volunteer of Excellence Award 	Any Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Outstanding service in delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in partnership with girls, OR outstanding service in support of the council's mission delivery to adult members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
Honor Pin 	Any Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Demonstrated outstanding service to two or more Service Units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
Thanks Badge 	Any Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Demonstrates ongoing commitment, leadership and service which has an exceptional, measurable impact on the mission-delivery goals of the entire council or the entire Girl Scout Movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
Thanks Badge II 	Any Volunteer who has received the Thanks Badge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Previous Thanks Badge recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role, resulting in a measurable impact that benefits the entire council or the entire Girl Scout Movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.


Council Level Awards

Deadline to submit these award nominations is January 31, 2026.

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
<p>The Carol Keil Rising Star Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Completed a maximum of 1-3 years of service. Recognizes a volunteer during the first 3 years of service for outstanding service to a troop, service unit, and community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
<p>GSSC Council Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Completed 5+ years of service Demonstrated outstanding service that has left a lasting impact on the council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
<p>Beacon Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Completed 10+ years of service Cultivated new and lasting relationship(s) with an individual, organization, or school within the community to further enhance the Girl Scout Leadership Experience for a troop or Service Unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
<p>The Dorothy L. Klug Golden Lantern Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Completed 15+ years of service Recognizes a volunteer whose inner light of leadership and enthusiasm for Girl Scouts has ignited a flame of excellence that is passed to all members of the council, as well as the community outside of Girl Scouts. This volunteer serves as a role model for compassion and service within a troop or service unit, and has built girls' courage, confidence, and character with a specific interest in outdoor leadership experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.

Council Level Awards (Cont'd)

Deadline to submit these award nominations is January 31, 2026.

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
<p>The Golden Trailblazer Award</p> 	<p>A Girl Scout Alumna from our Council who has received her Girl Scout Gold Award.</p> <p><u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Girl Scout Alumna from our Council between the ages of 21-30 and has received the Girl Scout Gold Award while an active member. Recognizes an alumna who continues to make an impact in the world with her vision and leadership. This alumna continues to support the Girl Scout movement through her community service, career, or volunteerism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.



Council Level Years of Service



Nominees must have completed the indicated year of service at the time of nomination. Candidates with over 30 years of service will be reviewed for an award annually by Council Leadership, including GSSC Board of Directors, and Awards Committee.

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT THESE AWARD NOMINATIONS IS JANUARY 31, 2026

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
20 Years of Service Award	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Volunteer who has served for a minimum of 20 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
25 Years of Service Award	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Volunteer who has served for a minimum of 25 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.
30 Years of Service Award	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Volunteer who has served for a minimum of 30 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Council Leadership including, GSSC Board of Directors and Awards Committee.







Service Unit Level Awards

There are specific criteria for each Service Unit level award and recipients are considered and selected by Service Unit Team Award committee members. These awards are presented and purchased by the Service Unit Team. DEADLINE TO SUBMIT THESE AWARD NOMINATIONS IS MARCH 1, 2026.

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
5 Years of Service Award 	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Volunteer who has served for a minimum of 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
10 Years of Service Award 	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Volunteer who has served for a minimum of 10 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
15 Years of Service Award 	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Volunteer who has served for a minimum of 15 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
Cookie Champion Award 	Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Has served as Girl Scout Cookie Campaign Manager for 3 consecutive years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
First Year Leader Excellence Award 	Any First Year Troop Leader Can be awarded to multiple individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered troop leader in good standing who began their first year of service on October 1st of the current Girl Scout year. First Year Troop Leader who has demonstrated excellence in the role. This award will celebrate volunteer contributions within their first year of service which may include the current Girl Scout Year 2025-2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.



Service Unit Level Awards *(Cont'd)*

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
<p>Keep The Promise, Live The Law Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Troop volunteer, including a leader, who completed a 4th year of service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>Leader Legacy Award <i>Formally the Leader Thank You Award</i></p> 	<p>Any Troop Leader Can be awarded to multiple individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered troop leader in good standing. Troop Leader with 10 or more consecutive years of service to the same troop or program level that will not be returning as a volunteer for the next Girl Scout year. This award will celebrate troop leader contributions and 10 years of consecutive service as of September 30, 2025, AND who have completed their final year of service in 2024-2025 or WILL complete their final year for 2025-2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>Mags & Munchies Maven Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Has served as Fall Product Sales Manager for 3 consecutive years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>Outdoor Enthusiast Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered volunteer in good standing. Has shared an outdoor experience with a troop or Service Unit within the last 2 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.

Service Unit Level Awards *(Cont'd)*

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
<p>Outstanding Leader Award</p> 	<p>Any Troop Leader Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered troop leader in good standing. Has performed service beyond the role expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>Outstanding Volunteer Award</p> 	<p>Any Volunteer Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered troop volunteer in good standing. Served in a non-leader role that has performed service beyond role expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>President's Circle Award</p> 	<p>Any Service Unit Team Member Awarded 1 per Service Unit annually. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered Service Unit Team member in good standing. Demonstrates outstanding service to one Service Unit promoting Girl Scouts in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>Service Unit Star Award</p> 	<p>Any Service Unit Team Member Can be awarded to multiple individuals. <u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered Service Unit Team member in good standing Has served in a leadership role on the Service Unit Team for over 3 years and made an impact within the Service Unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team

Service Unit Level Awards (Cont'd)

Award	Honors	Criteria	Nomination/Approval Process
<p>Soaring to Success Award</p> 	<p>Any Troop Leader</p> <p>Can be awarded to multiple individuals.</p> <p><u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered troop leader in good standing. Has led a specific troop from Daisy to Ambassador and fostered leadership and mentoring opportunities during the Cadette to Ambassador program levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.
<p>Spirit of Scouting Award</p> 	<p>Any Troop Leader</p> <p>Can be awarded to multiple individuals.</p> <p><u>This award cannot be received by the same person more than once.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any registered troop leader in good standing. Has managed troops with the following troop size: Daisy: 20+ Brownie: 25+ Junior: 21+ Cadette: 16+ Senior: 15+ Ambassador: 15+ Multi-level: 10+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual completes online nomination form. Recipient selected by Service Unit Team.

Where to Place Volunteer Insignia, Patches, and Pins

