

# Adult Awards Handbook

## 2024-2025 Girl Scout Year

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. An important part of the Girl Scout program is recognizing volunteers for their contributions.







The goal of this handbook is to educate Service Unit (SU) Adult Awards Coordinators, SU Awards Committee Members, and SU Managers about Adult Awards in Girl Scouting and to simplify the Adult Awards process. Resources for Adult Awards, including the Adult Awards Coordinator Volunteer Position Description, are found on the Girl Scouts, Hornets’ Nest Council (GSHNC) website by going to <https://www.hngirlscouts.org/>, clicking on Members, and going to Forms and Documents under For Volunteers.





- There are 2 main categories of Adult Awards at GSHNC. Both categories are covered in this handbook.
- Service Unit Level Awards** recognize volunteers for their contributions in Girl Scouting at the local level, are determined by your local SU Awards Committee, and are awarded each spring, typically at a Service Unit awards ceremony in May or at the last SU meeting before most troops break for the summer.
  - Board Level Awards** recognize those volunteers whose continuing service has been truly outstanding and benefits at least one Service Unit or program delivery audience, the Council, or the entire Girl Scout movement. Nominations are reviewed by a council-level awards committee that makes recommendations to the GSHNC Board of Directors. Volunteers normally do not know they have been nominated for Board Level Awards unless they actually receive an award. Typically, surprise notifications are announced at the March SU meeting, and then volunteers are officially recognized during the awards ceremony after the GSHNC Annual Meeting (usually held in April) where award recipients can invite loved ones to share the moment of recognition with them.

SU Awards Coordinators should familiarize themselves with the awards criteria for all of the adult awards (see Service Unit and Board Level Awards charts found in this handbook) and promote them within their Service Unit. The SU Awards Committee should also think of other creative ways they can recognize volunteers as well. We have included some ideas in this handbook to help you get started.

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# Service Unit (SU) Level Awards Chart





Service Unit Award	Who can receive it?	Criteria	Procedure
<b>Green Hornet</b> 	Registered <u>First Year</u> Leader	<p>All awards may be received only once in a lifetime except the Volunteer of Excellence award which may be received twice (see below).</p> <p>The Candidate has fulfilled the position with enthusiasm and vigor and has provided a well-rounded program including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A service project</li> <li>• Participation in the annual Council cookie program</li> <li>• Attendance at 3/4 of their SU Meetings</li> <li>• Completion of required new leader training, + 1 extra class/workshop</li> <li>• Troop participation in a SU or Council event</li> </ul>	<p>SU Awards order forms due to GSHNC on/before April 1.</p> <p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green Hornet Card on website.</b></li> <li>• <b>No maximum # per SU</b></li> </ul>
<b>Silver Hornet</b> 	Registered Adult Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have been an active adult member for 5+ years</li> <li>• Must have rendered continuous service for betterment of the Girl Scout Program</li> <li>• Has met her/his volunteer position description requirements</li> </ul> <p>• <b>Maximum of 4 pins per Service Unit.</b></p>	<p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p>
<b>Gold Hornet</b> 	Registered Adult Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have been active adult member for ten or more years</li> <li>• Must have rendered continuous service for betterment of the Girl Scout Program</li> <li>• Must have served on a SU Team for at least one year or chaired a SU event within the last 5 years</li> </ul> <p>• <b>Maximum of 4 pins per Service Unit.</b></p>	<p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p>
<b>Outstanding Volunteer</b> 	Registered Adult Volunteers	<p>The candidate has consistently performed at a level that exceeds expectations for at least 2 years. This award requires a nomination plus one person who supports the nomination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination form found on website</b></li> </ul>	<p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p> <p>Nomination form (or letter with all required info)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No maximum # per SU</b></li> </ul>
<b>Pearl of Perseverance</b> 	Registered Adult Volunteers	<p>This candidate has continued to serve Girl Scouts through adverse times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination form found on website</b></li> </ul>	<p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p> <p>Nomination form (or letter with all required info)</p> <p><b>No maximum # per SU</b></p>
<b>Spirit of Girl Scouting</b> 	Registered Adult Volunteers	<p>The candidate must have already received the Appreciation Pin (or a higher GSUSA Board Level Award) and has also continued to provide outstanding service to a SU or program delivery audience in a way that furthers the Council's goals for at least 3 years after receiving the Appreciation Pin or other Board Level Award.</p>	<p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No maximum # per SU</b></li> </ul>

<b>Volunteer of Excellence</b>  	Registered Adult Volunteers	<p>An adult can receive this award for working directly with girls and/or for working with adults.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be an active adult member</li> <li>• Must have successfully completed a term of service and all requirements, including appropriate training, for the position</li> </ul> <p><u>For service to girls:</u> The volunteer's contribution is beyond the expectations of the position to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls using the National Program Portfolio.</p> <p><u>For working with adults:</u> The volunteer's performance has been beyond the expectations of the position and has supported the mission-delivery goals within the SU in one or more of the following areas: Membership Development/Community Cultivation, Volunteer Relations and Support, Program, Leadership and Governance, Fund Development, and Support Service (such as IT).</p>	<p>Recipients are determined by the SU Awards Committee who orders awards through the Council office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nomination Form</li> <li>• Endorsement Form Submitted to the SU Adult Awards Coordinator.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>This award can only be received twice – once for service to girls and once for service to adults.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No maximum # per SU</b></li> <li>• <b>Forms on website</b></li> </ul>
<b>Membership Numeral Guard</b> 	Registered Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This counts <b>Girl + Adult</b> years of membership combined , but is only for adults</li> <li>• Available in five year increments.</li> <li>• All Membership Numeral Guards, including 25+, are now presented by the SU at the SU Awards Ceremony.</li> </ul> <p><b>• Use MNG/YS Card found on website</b></p>	Members complete the "Membership Numeral Guard/Years of Service Pin" order form and turn in to the SU Adult Awards Coordinator.
<b>Years of Service Pin</b> 	Registered Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is for <b>Adult</b> years of active service as a registered adult member only.</li> <li>• Available in five year increments.</li> <li>• All Years of Service Pins, including 25+, are now presented by the SU at the SU Awards Ceremony.</li> </ul> <p><b>• Use MNG/YS Card found on website</b></p>	Members complete the "Membership Numeral Guard/Years of Service Pin" order form and turn in to the SU Adult Awards Coordinator.
<b>Esprit de Corps</b>	Service Unit Teams	<p>Recognizes a Service Unit Team that works together in an outstanding manner to support volunteers and the goals and mission of Girl Scouting.</p> <p><b>• Service Units will be recognized at the council level.</b></p> <p><b>• Application available on website.</b></p>	SU completes Esprit de Corps form and turns in to GSHNC SU Membership Engagement Specialist for review/approval by July 31.

# Board Level Awards Chart

Board Level Awards require nominations and endorsements, which are submitted online through the GSHNC website between November 1 and January 15 each year. Nominations are reviewed by a council-level committee that makes recommendations to the GSHNC Board of Directors for final decisions. Nominators are notified of the results after the Board of Directors makes their decision in February.

Board Level Awards recipients are typically announced at the March Service Unit meeting where the volunteers are surprised. The awards are officially presented during the awards ceremony after the GSHNC Annual Meeting (usually held in April) where recipients can invite loved ones to share the moment of recognition with them. Service Units should also include the recognition at their Service Unit Awards Ceremony.

Award	Who can receive it?	Criteria	Procedure
<b>Appreciation Pin</b> 	Registered Adults or Staff Members	All awards may be received only once in a lifetime. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate has delivered outstanding service <b>to at least one</b> Service Unit or program delivery audience in a way that furthers the Council's goals.</li> <li>The service goes beyond the expectations for the position.</li> </ul>	Nomination & Endorsement forms are found on the GSHNC website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nomination Form</li> <li>2 Letters of Endorsement</li> </ul>
<b>Honor Pin</b> 	Registered Adults or Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The registered member has delivered outstanding service to <b>2 or more</b> Service Units or program delivery audiences in a way that furthers the Council's goals.</li> <li>The service goes beyond the expectations for the position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nomination Form</li> <li>3 Letters of Endorsement</li> </ul>
<b>Thanks Badge</b> 	Registered Adults or Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate's performance has been truly outstanding and has benefited the total Council or the entire Girl Scout movement.</li> <li>The service is so significantly beyond the expectations that no other award is appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nomination Form</li> <li>4 Letters of Endorsement</li> </ul>
<b>Thanks Badge II</b> 	Registered Adults or Staff Members (have previously received the Thanks Badge)	The candidate has already received the Thanks Badge and has continued to contribute in extraordinary ways that benefit the total Council or the entire Girl Scout movement (performing at the same high level for an extended period of time). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased her/his sphere of influence.</li> <li>Used her/his talents to move into another field or endeavor.</li> <li>The service is so significantly beyond expectations that no other award is appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nomination Form</li> <li>4 Letters of Endorsement</li> </ul>

- Staff Member Nominations – If nominated, one letter of endorsement will need to come from that person's supervisor.
- Staff Members Nominating and Endorsing Others – Staff members, working directly with volunteers, may be involved with nominating and/or endorsing members for Board Level Awards.

# 6 Steps for Successfully Recognizing Volunteers in your Service Unit

## STEP 1 – Understand the Awards

Refer to the Service Unit Level Awards Chart and the Board Level Awards Chart found in this booklet for comprehensive information.

## STEP 2 – Mark Your Calendar at the Beginning of the Girl Scout Year

Work with SU Manager to ensure Adult Awards announcements/deadlines are on the agenda. Share the announcements through email and/or any social media groups that your SU uses to inform volunteers about important information so that you include those who are not able to attend SU meetings.

- **November 1** - Board Level Award nominations/endorsements begin. Forms become available on Council website.
- **January 15** - Deadline for Board Level Award nominations and endorsements. Please see Board Level Awards section of this handbook for details on Board Level Awards.
- **March 15** - Service Unit Award nominations (along with Green Hornet Cards and Membership Numeral Guard/Years of Service Cards) are due to Adult Awards Coordinators at the Service Unit level.
- **April 1** - Service Unit Awards Orders are due to GSHNC.
- **April 1** - Deadline for troops to apply for **Outstanding Troop Award**
- **July 31** - **Esprit de Corps Award** applications due.

## STEP 3 – Form a Service Unit Awards Committee at the Beginning of the Girl Scout Year

It is best to have an awards committee of at least 2-3 members to help with the process. Committee members can then help with many things such as: promoting awards, identifying candidates for awards, establishing guidelines, and making decisions. Having others on the committee can also help generate creative ideas for other ways to recognize volunteers, and they can help with your Service Unit Awards Ceremony in the spring.

### **Examples of committee structures used by different Service Units:**

**Example A:** The Service Unit Awards Coordinator focuses on both Service Unit and Board Level Awards and finds one or more other volunteers to serve on the committee and assist with the decision-making process.

**Example B:** One Awards Committee member focuses on Service Unit Awards and another Awards Committee member focuses on Board Level Awards.

**Example C:** The Service Unit Manager can be the other committee member if you are having difficulty forming a committee. The GSHNC Service Unit Support Specialist can also assist with the process.

**STEP 4 – Create a Plan with your Committee at the Beginning of the Girl Scout Year**

- Promote all awards at the beginning of the year, and throughout the year continue to do so.
- Take advantage of the Adult History Form, the Green Hornet Cards and the Membership Numeral Guard/Years of Service Cards (available online) to help track Service Unit Level Awards.
- Encourage your Service Unit Team to work towards receiving the Esprit de Corps Award.
- In addition to Service Unit Level Awards, review the Board Level Awards and think about who in your Service Unit you may want to nominate. Review “The 4 Steps for Submitting a Board Level Award Nomination or Endorsement” section of this handbook.
- Promote the Outstanding Troop Award to your Troops beginning in the fall so that they can plan for it.
- Plan and advertise for your Service Unit Awards Ceremony, typically held in May, so that you can have fun recognizing volunteers as the traditional Girl Scout year comes to a close.

**STEP 5 – Order Service Unit Awards/Submit Nominations for Board Level Awards****STEP 6 – Celebrate Volunteers at the Service Unit Awards Ceremony** (Present the awards!)

- However the Service Unit decides to celebrate the accomplishments of volunteers, make it special.
- Use creative ideas to recognize those in the Service Unit who may not have received an official award (see “Other Creative Ways to Recognize Volunteers” section of this handbook).

# Resources for Awards Coordinators

## 1. Resources found on the GSHNC Website by going to <https://www.hngirlscouts.org/>, clicking on Members, and going to Forms and Documents under For Volunteers.

- Adult Awards Coordinator Position Description
- Adult Awards Handbook (this booklet)
- Adult History Form (Volunteers can complete/update each year, helps Service Units determine awards)
- Esprit de Corps Award Form (for Service Unit Team recognition)
- Green Hornet\* Card (Distribute to new leaders throughout the year)
- Membership Numeral Guard/Years of Service Card
- Outstanding Volunteer Nomination Form
- Service Unit Awards Order Form
- Volunteer of Excellence (for service to girls or for working with adults) Forms

### Board Level Awards Resources

- Adult Awards Handbook (this booklet)
- Board Level Awards Nomination (submitted online, link available from November 1 – January 15 each year)
- Board Level Awards Endorsement (submitted online, link available from November 1 – January 15 each year)

### Other Resources

- Adult Awards Images and Placement
- Outstanding Troop Award

#### \*Green Hornet Awards

-It is at the Service Unit's discretion to decide how they want to track information for this award. The Green Hornet Card is a good tool.

-This award is intended for someone who is in their 1<sup>st</sup> year as a volunteer in a leadership position – not just someone who is new to GSHNC.

-Volunteers begin at different times of the year. If the volunteer has not had the opportunity to complete the requirements because they did not begin in time, the Service Unit Awards Committee has the discretion to decide if they would like to award the Green Hornet for the first full calendar year of service.

-For the Green Hornet Award, it is intended for the Leader, Co-Leader, or Assistant Leader to meet the requirements, rather than the troop; however, if the volunteer missed a meeting but made sure that someone represented their Troop, the Service Unit Awards Committee can use their discretion in awarding the volunteer.

## 2. Reports – Contact Your Service Unit Support Specialist or Customer Care for reports

- **Service Unit Awards Report**
  - Use this to determine any awards a volunteer has already earned so that you are not duplicating awards.
- **Adults: Years in Girl Scouts Report\***
  - Membership Numeral Guards and Years of Service continue to be self-reported by volunteers using the Membership Numeral Guard/Years of Service card.
  - This report can be used as a guide when determining Membership Numeral Guard and Years of Service Pin orders when it is time to prepare your Service Unit Awards order, but note that the report may not be completely accurate for various reasons. If using the report, allow volunteers to update/verify their years and then turn it in to the council office so that we can update our records accordingly.
  - **\*How to count Girl Scout years:** To determine the number of membership years, begin counting with the first year of membership. For example, if someone registers for the first time in the fall of 2017, that is counted as their first year. Then if they renew in 2018, 2019, and 2020, they will have 4 years of membership, and so on!
- **Number of Troops in Service Unit Report**
  - This will help you determine how many Silver Hornet and Gold Hornets you can award.
- **Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Reports**
  - This report can be used if you have a year-end ceremony that includes recognizing girls.



## 4 Steps for Submitting Board Level Award Nominations and Endorsements

### STEP 1 – Understand the Criteria for Board Level Awards

Use the Board Level Awards Chart to understand the criteria for all Board Level Awards.

**Tip:** The awards program booklet from the previous year can be found on the GSHNC website on the Adult Awards page. This is a great way to see some of the things that other volunteers have done to receive Board Level Awards.

### STEP 2 – Ensure the Correct Number of Endorsements are Submitted

Nominations without the correct number of endorsements will not be considered. Nominators are responsible for getting the correct number of endorsers to submit the endorsement form on time.

**Tip:** It is best for the nominator to submit their online nomination first because the endorsers will get an automated message to complete the endorsement. If the endorser completes their endorsement before the nominator, the endorser will still get an automated message about completing the endorsement once the nominator completes the nomination form.

Award	# of endorsements required (in addition to the nomination)
Appreciation Pin	2
Honor Pin	3
Thanks Badge	4
Thanks Badge II	4

### STEP 3 – Prepare!!! (Spend time preparing before you complete the online form)

Nominators will need to collect the following required information about the potential recipient in order to complete the nomination form (endorsers will not be asked to input this information). If you need help, please ask members of your Service Unit Team, the GSHNC Service Unit Support Specialist for your area, or contact Customer Care.

- A. Girl Scout positions & dates of positions
- B. Service Unit Level Awards received & dates received, if any
- C. Board Level Awards received & dates received, if any

Nominators AND Endorsers are encouraged to draft their comments before completing the online form and INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- A. How you know the nominee and how you have interacted with them in Girl Scouting
- B. Position(s) in which the candidate has gone beyond expectations
- C. Number of Years the nominee has served in this position
- D. Service provided AND impact of the service FOR EACH POSITION where they have gone beyond expectations

**Tips:**

-Nominators/Endorsers may want to consult with each other when drafting their comments, but each person should write their own personal comments when submitting the nomination or endorsement.

-Quality is better than quantity. You must show how this individual has gone beyond the expectations for each position in order for the volunteer to be considered for a Board Level Award.

-Be concise but complete.

-Review the “Helpful Tips for Recognizing Adults for Board Level Awards” page in this booklet before submitting your online nomination/endorsement.

### STEP 4 – Complete the Online Form Before the January 15 Deadline

After you have prepared by doing all of the above, you are now ready to complete the nomination/endorsement by completing the online form, which can be found by going to <https://www.hngirlscouts.org/>.



## Helpful Tips for Recognizing Adults for Board Level Awards

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- To receive a Board Level Award, the nominator/endorser must show that the nominee is providing service, which is above and beyond expectations.
- Consider recognizing volunteers at the SU level before nominating them for a Board Level Award.
- Typically, the nominee must have completed at least a full year in their position to be considered for a Board Level Award, otherwise it is difficult to evaluate the nominee.
- Explain information that you provide.
  - If using language such as “helped coordinate” or “co-chaired”, be sure to explain the nominee’s specific role and what they accomplished.
  - If the nominee helped with Service Unit events, be specific about which events, and include details about what the nominee did for the events.
  - If they taught classes or facilitated events, do your best to include the number of times, number of people served, and who benefited from the service.
- Be cautious of Troop parent endorsements. Parents can write letters, but they may not see the whole view of what the nominee has done outside of being a Troop Leader. Board Level Awards are given for service to Service Unit(s) and the Council, not Troop activities.
- If you know the information, please use quantitative statements such as number of girls participating in an event, increase in number of families participating in the giving campaign or amount of dollar donations, etc.
- You can also use qualitative terms.
  - Tell a story demonstrating how the volunteer positively affected the life of a girl through Girl Scouting.
  - Explain how a volunteer recognized the need to reach out to a group of girls and get them involved.
  - Describe how someone provided leadership to help the Service Unit or Council achieve a goal.
  - Recount how someone stepped outside her or his normal position to provide a much needed service.

**Example 1:** My nominee organized a Service Unit event on technology which attracted more than 350 girls (125 more than originally expected). Because of this event, the girls were exposed to and had a chance to experience hands on activities which they would normally not encounter. Two major corporations in our community also got to see Girl Scouting in a new light and they were exposed to what our organization is all about. They agreed to allow their employees time off to volunteer with local troops.

**Example 2:** My nominee saw a need for leaders of girls on the waiting list, so she, along with 3 other Brownie leaders, volunteered to lead a troop meeting one Saturday a month in rotation to allow these girls an opportunity to experience Girl Scouting. Her efforts did result in obtaining 2 mothers and 1 aunt to assume leadership.

**Example 3:** This volunteer stepped up as Service Unit Manager five years ago when no one else volunteered. At that time, she had only been a leader for 2 years. She has taken on several additional roles which needed to be filled such as Assistant Service Unit Registrar, Family Campaign Coordinator and Delegate. She ensured a smooth transition from year to year for our team members by finding and training the volunteers to fill needed positions. Having a well-functioning team improved the operation of our Service Unit as a whole. Her face is familiar to everyone in the Service Unit and she is the "go to" person for any questions.

**Example 4:** This volunteer’s passion is Leader Enrichment. Even though she no longer has a daughter in Girl Scouts, she continues to serve as our New Leader Mentor and Age Level Consultant. During our team retreat she compiled a list of everything a leader needed to know. She uses this list and has re-designed the networking meeting topics, including worksheets and craft ideas that leaders can take back to their troop meetings. This has resulted in an increase in leaders staying after the regular meeting to attend these breakout sessions.

**Example 5:** This volunteer serves as Archery, Low Challenge and Canoe facilitator. In addition to filling these roles at our campouts, he volunteers throughout the year for other Service Units. This volunteer has helped recruit other adults to get training for outdoor classes. More girls are experiencing the joys of outdoor activities. If you see him in action, you know why his classes are always full.

## **Other Creative Ways to Recognize Volunteers**

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Perhaps you have new volunteers who do not qualify for Service Unit or Board Level Awards or you have other volunteers who have received all possible Service Unit Level recognitions, but they are still actively involved. You don't want to forget about them! You may also want to recognize volunteers throughout the year as they do things that are really helpful.

Be creative and come up with unique ways to honor and recognize these volunteers. Here are some ideas to get you thinking!

### **Fun Awards**

Leaders can vote on which of their peers should receive these superlative-type awards. These are great to give out at the end-of-year Service Unit Awards Ceremony. Come up with your own categories, which could include some of the following:

- Pinterest Princess
- Sunshine Award
- Welcome Wagon Award
- Ultimate Leader Award

### **Certificates**

Create your own certificates for a job well done. You can search online for templates and wording. Be careful with wording such as Appreciation, Honor and Thanks so that there is no confusion with the Appreciation Pin, Honor Pin, and Thanks Badge. These are Board Level Awards for which recipients get official certificates from the GSHNC office.

Examples of Certificates that your Service Unit can create:

- Certificate of Excellence
- Certificate of Recognition
- You Make a Difference Certificate
- Treasured Volunteer Certificate

### **Small Gifts**

Use small gifts with fun notes to show support and appreciation for volunteers when helping on small projects or for continuing to provide support at any level. There are numerous ideas online. Search online for DIY (Do It Yourself) appreciation for volunteers.

Examples:

- A note card that reads "Thank you for your commit-MINT!" (or involve-MINT)
  - Attach a pack of mint gum or candy to it
- A note card that reads Thanks a Latte!
  - Attach it to a coffee item
- A note card that reads Thanks for popping in to help!
  - Attach it to a bag of popcorn

### **Visit the Hornets' Nest Girl Scout Shop**

The shop has a wide selection of gift items available to choose from to show appreciation to our wonderful volunteers.

***Thank you for taking time to learn all about awards for volunteers at Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council. We appreciate your help in recognizing our volunteers who are committed to helping girls and the Girl Scout organization!***