

Writing Endorsement Letters For adult awards

All award nominations are reviewed by the adult awards and recognition committee, a group of Girl Scout volunteers who are committed to recognizing exemplary service to Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. The endorsement letter should illustrate to the committee that the nominee meets the award's requirements and that their service in the previous Girl Scout membership year is worthy of a Girl Scout award. *[Note: endorsements for Thanks I & II Badges should include service for the past four years. See award nomination application for details.]*

1. Most of the awards require more than one letter of endorsement. If you are the nominator coordinating the nomination, provide this **Writing Endorsement Letters** document to the individuals writing letters to ensure that they document the relevant and specific information needed.
2. Carefully review the nomination application for the award (www.girlscoutsrv.org). Pay close attention to the award's requirements and questions to address in the endorsement letter.
3. Provide objective, results-oriented information on how the nominee's service has benefited the target audience (depending on the award this may be a troop/group, service unit, or council). Document this information per the award requirements.
 - a. What has the nominee done?
 - b. When did this occur?
 - c. Who benefited?
 - d. How did they benefit?
4. Provide details such as relevant facts and specific actions and behaviors that demonstrate the requirements were met and that the nominee went "above and beyond" the expectations of their position.
5. Most likely, the committee members reviewing the letter will not know the nominee. Write your letter assuming that the only information the committee will have to make their decision is what you provide to them. Take the time to construct a well written letter and be as specific as possible. It is possible for someone whose service does warrant an award to not be approved for the award because the endorsement letters don't sufficiently convey that to the committee.
6. Use abbreviations only after defining the definition for the abbreviation. Example: service unit manager (SUM).
7. Be sure to describe or define "local" words or phrases.
8. Include your name, address, and phone number.
9. Include your position in Girl Scouts and how you know the nominee.
10. *[All Girl Scout leaders are wonderful people, many put a lot of time into the Girl Scout program, most are liked by everyone, all should believe in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and for most, their dedication to Girl Scouts is apparent.]* Please stay away from only "feel good" statements in your letter. It is difficult to determine if the nominee's service went "above and beyond" and warrants recognition without specific details.
11. If you are writing letters for multiple nominees, please make sure each letter is unique and speaks to that individual's specific service and value. Please do not create "form" endorsement letters for multiple nominees even if what they did was similar. Using "form" letters or "cutting and pasting" standard statements and using in multiple letters takes the sincerity out of the letter and may give the committee cause to question if the nominees' service is deserving of recognition.
12. Remember, if approved for the award the nominee will receive the endorsement letters. For many the letters are more special than the actual award.

Examples

Note: All names and other information below are purely fictional. Any similarities to real people and places are just coincidental.

Compare the following sets of excerpts:

A. “Feel good” statements only

“Sue is an outstanding event planner committed to girl planning. Her dedication to Girl Scouting is apparent. She is a well liked and well respected Girl Scout volunteer.”

B. Statements with relevant facts and specific actions/behaviors

“Sue ensured that the service unit event was girl led by establishing a planning team made up of ten girls from various troops that met on five different occasions. She acted as an advisor and assisted the girls by offering suggestions on how they could organize their ideas. She helped guide the discussion, when needed, by asking open ended questions, such as “have you considered... or how do you plan to handle...”. These questions helped girls consider all angles of their ideas and evaluate what would and would not work.

Ask yourself, what did this person do? For whom? When did it happen? Who benefited and in what way?

A. Statement with relevant facts and specific actions/behaviors

“In the past two years the girls in the Lakeside Service Unit have benefited greatly from Bonnie’s professional relationship with the county history center. Bonnie worked with the Girl Scout Junior troops to determine common questions that they had about the local history. She then arranged for speakers to offer programming to troops (an oral history project) through the local Museum for Scouting. The event was well attended, with more than 100 Girl Scout Juniors from the possible 200 Girl Scout Juniors in the service unit attending. The evaluations of the event were so positive that this year Bonnie helped with the program development for a service unit event in October 2006 at Historic Fort James. This was the first time that an event for the Girl Scouts had ever been held at Fort James. Again, more than 100 girls (Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors) and their families from the service unit attended the event. The event was so popular that the county historical society is planning to begin offering regularly scheduled programs for Girl Scouts.”

B. “Feel good” statements only

“Bonnie is a great person. Everyone knows Bonnie and just loves her. She loves her job and shares it with Girl Scouts. All of the Girl Scouts in our service unit benefit. You can truly see that Bonnie is dedicated to Girl Scouts and what it means to girls.”

Ask yourself, what did this person do? For whom? When did it happen? Who benefited and in what way?

Questions?

If you have questions regarding River Valleys’ adult awards, including constructing your endorsement letter or determining which award best fits the nominee’s service, contact the volunteer development manager at 800-854-0787 or awards@girlscoutsrv.org