

WRITING A STRONG AWARD ENDORSEMENT and Why it Matters

All award packets (an award packet includes a nomination form and the required endorsements for the specific award) are reviewed by a volunteer selections committee. This committee is comprised of volunteers from across the council. They review each award nomination and compare the information presented about the volunteer with the criteria established for each award. The information presented in the nomination and the endorsement form is vital to the decision making process of the volunteer committee. They only know what is presented in the award packet.

Before you start, think why you believe the nominee should be recognized. How has she/he gone above and beyond the position description? What is unique about her contribution? What are the results of her efforts? Jot down your ideas as you think about them so that you can organize them to include all of the accomplishments. Start early in asking for endorsement letters. People need time to think and write. Give the letter writer a date prior to the September 1 deadline to ensure that it is at the council by the deadline.

To help present strong, measurable and impactful information in the award packet, use the chart below to help turn a general statement into one that is a strong endorsement statement that provides information that will help the volunteer selection committee show appreciation to deserving volunteers.

GENERAL STATEMENT	THINK ABOUT THIS	STRONGER ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT
“She has been a leader for a long time and is committed to girls.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many years? • What grade levels has she worked with? • What has she done that shows her commitment to girls? 	“For eight years, she led a mixed troop of both Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors. In those eight years she has welcomed girls from three different schools. Her philosophy is “the girls need Girl Scouts, all the girls from second to fifth grade are welcomed in Troop 55555.”
“He is a great leader.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of leadership qualities has he exhibited with the girls? • What makes him stand out? 	“He believes in girl-led and continuously brings leadership opportunities to girls. Each of the girls in his troop have an opportunity to be a leader throughout the year. Each girl takes a month being responsible for leading the troop meeting, including organizing all aspects. The girls learn how to plan, speak in front of others, create an agenda, and lead a meeting.”
“She always goes above and beyond.”	<p>How? Be specific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a story about that shows how she has gone above and beyond. 	“Her troop was working on their Silver Award. She recognized that she did not have all of the skills and knowledge to guide the girls successfully through all of the details. She recruited parents, service unit volunteers, leaders and several local business persons from our community, all helped the girls work through the details of their Silver Award Take Action Project. The girl’s project resulted in the local park having a nature trail with ten new birdhouses, four miles of safe trails, and new maps for visitors to follow. The mayor attended the grand opening of the new park along with five hundred community members “

The examples above show how the volunteer selection committee looks for details including, impact and results. This takes a little more work, however the details will give the volunteer selection committee what they need to make a good decision. The results will be that more volunteers will be appreciated and that is a great thing!

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SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT LETTER #1:

The opening paragraph should introduce the purpose of the letter, the nominee, and the reason for the nomination.

I am writing this letter to support Jane Doe who is the Getting Started Facilitator in Dusty Dawn Service Area for the Honor Pin. Jane has diligently worked in our neighborhood as well as Falling Water and Whispering Wind Service Areas to provide quality training to leaders which has resulted in improved delivery of Girl Scouting in all three areas.

The body of the letter should describe the specific service, who benefited from the service and provide results of the service that went beyond the position description.

Jane recognized that many of our leaders did not complete the trainings necessary to help them be successful in their first year as leaders. She realized that in our community many adults work second and third shifts which became a real challenge in trying to get them trained. She found that several close by areas were struggling with the same issue. She called a meeting of the service unit teams and proposed that they offer training at unconventional times due to the nature of the audience they wanted to serve. The service areas were immediately in agreement with her proposal. Jane went to the Adult Development staff at the Girl Scout council. Working together with both volunteers and staff, Jane established and delivered three training sessions that offered the courses needed by the untrained volunteers. The amazing thing is that they were offered at a local church from 6–9AM when everyone was getting off work. By working with the service areas, breakfast was provided. Jane's dedication paid off when 30 inexperienced leaders from three service areas were trained to work with their troops. She showed that by collaborating with each other, much can be accomplished. Jane's work across the three service areas benefited over 200 girls in new troops and has created strong relationships with the three area teams and staff members. For her innovation in training and in partnership with three service areas and staff member, Jane Doe deserves the Honor Pin.

The closing of the letter must include the writer's name, service unit name as well as her address (email) and phone number. Here is an example:

Sincerely,

Mary Smith
Dusty Dawn Service Area
1234 Main Street
Phoenix, AZ 85000
602-452-7000 or msmith123@aol.com



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SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT LETTER #2:

December 13, 2014

Adult Recognitions Committee:

I am writing in support of Susie Scout's candidacy for the Volunteer of Excellence Award. Susie is serving in her second year as Leader Support Coordinator for the [service unit name] and during this time Susie has made great strides in creating a community of volunteers that enjoys sisterhood, camaraderie, and support. Susie runs monthly district meetings and gets [%] attendance. She has coordinated guest speakers and enrichment trainings, investiture/rededication ceremonies, leader award ceremonies, and much more. She adds little touches to the meetings, like prizes and treats, that create a casual and fun atmosphere for the leaders. The volunteers in [Service Unit] are engaged and informed thanks to Susie's efforts.

Susie has been a troop leader for many years, and this Girl Scout experience makes her a natural leader and coach for her fellow volunteers. She can provide advice, insight, and resources for almost any situation. Susie interacts fabulously with other leaders and they feel comfortable and confident approaching her for assistance.

Susie is committed to staying on top of, and championing for fellow volunteers, the latest news, and developments at the council level. She attends Lead & Learn and other council events as they apply to her operational volunteer position. This year Susie has been on the volunteer committee for the new Customer Engagement Platform—providing input and feedback on our new systems and tools. Susie's enthusiasm about these upcoming new resources is evident, and she has been getting her fellow volunteers on board and excited about the changes!

Susie is also leader of a very active 9th grade Senior troop and has been with them as their leader throughout their Girl Scout careers. Susie also led a group through their graduation from high school a couple of years ago. Her troop members are engaged and enthusiastic—hosting badge workshops, community events, and earning the high awards. No doubt the girls' passion can be attributed to Susie's leadership and modeling of the Girl Scout values.

Susie is a cheerleader for Girl Scouts within her troop, her district, the council, and the community as a whole. Her service to our Girl Scout council is much appreciated and we sincerely thank her for her ongoing support, dedication, and leadership!

Sincerely,

Mary Smith
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SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT LETTER #3:

December 8, 2014

Dear GSACPC Volunteer Recognition Committee:

Please consider Vicky Volunteer for the Thanks Badge II.

I am writing to recommend Vicky for the Thanks Badge II. Vicky has been a member and volunteer of the Girls Scouts Arizona Cactus Pine Council for 16 years and has served in roles serving troops, her service unit and community, and the GSACPC Council.

I have had the opportunity to work with Vicky in her role as an Adult Facilitator. In 2013, GSACPC began to reevaluate our presentation of conflict management training for volunteers, and Vicky, with her professional background in Adult Learning, was an invaluable resource. Vicky assisted, and often took the lead, as we modified the content and delivery of this important training. Vicky also pioneered the delivery of the conflict management training at Service Unit and Community Meetings.

In the fall of 2014, GSACPC began the process of reevaluating the delivery method of all our training and began developing a more robust eLearning curriculum. Vicky is providing valuable feedback and serving as the voice of the Adult Facilitators to help ensure we are developing and offering the best product.

Vicky is always available for meetings and provides additional support whenever needed. Her service and leadership is essential to the continued success and growth of GSACPC training and eLearning curriculum.

Sincerely,

Mary Smith
Dusty Dawn Service Area
1234 Main Street
Phoenix, AZ 85000
602-452-7000 or msmith123@aol.com