



girl scouts 
heart of new jersey

Volunteer Recognition Awards



Your Guide to the
2026 Volunteer
Recognition Awards

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Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey's Volunteer Recognition Awards celebrate the extraordinary efforts of our volunteers who inspire and empower girls to build courage, confidence, and character. This guide will walk you through the nomination process, explain the awards, and help you honor the individuals who make a difference in our Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey (GSHNJ) community.

Key Dates:

- **Nominations Open:** Monday, January 5, 2026
- **Nominations Close:** Sunday, February 8, 2026
- **Event Date:** Wednesday, April 22 starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Bridgewater Manor, Bridgewater, NJ

Why Nominate?

Our volunteers are the heart of our Girl Scout council, and your nomination is a meaningful way to honor their commitment and dedication. By nominating a volunteer, you're recognizing their exceptional achievements and celebrating the incredible difference they make in shaping our organization. This is your chance to show appreciation for those who inspire and empower others, strengthening our community and encouraging more individuals to contribute.

Awards

Volunteering is a *work of heart.*



Compass Award

Honors a seasoned volunteer (5+ years) who broadens perspectives, inspires confidence, and provides steady guidance for new volunteers to grow and succeed at the troop or service unit level.

Dedicated Leader Award

Recognizes an adult volunteer whose exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment have strengthened troop experiences, fostered impactful programming, and built a collaborative, inclusive, and thriving GSHNJ/Girl Scout community.

Guiding Star Award

Recognizes a troop volunteer whose 10+ years of steady guidance—from early levels through Ambassadors—has shaped girls' experiences and created a lasting legacy of support and inspiration.

Plaque of Appreciation

Recognizes a high degree of service and support to a troop, group, or service unit by an individual, group, business, or organization outside of the Girl Scout movement.

Rookie of the Year

Recognizes a volunteer who has completed one year in their role, whose energy, enthusiasm, initiative, and dedication have made an exceptional impact on the GSHNJ/Girl Scout community.

Appreciation Pin

Celebrates outstanding service within a single service unit, recognizing volunteers who go above and beyond to strengthen their local Girl Scout community.

Honor Pin

Awarded for exceptional service that extends across two or more service units, this recognition highlights a volunteer's broad impact on GSHNJ's mission.

President's Award

Recognizes a Service Unit Team whose exceptional efforts exceeded goals and delivered measurable impact in program delivery, membership retention and growth, fund development, or community visibility.

Thanks Badge

Recognizes volunteer service that benefits all of GSHNJ or the entire Girl Scout movement and goes above and beyond in the role.

Thanks Badge II

Honors a Thanks Badge recipient who has continued to provide outstanding volunteer service benefiting GSHNJ or the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Volunteer of Excellence

Celebrates a volunteer whose outstanding service and commitment have directly enhanced the Girl Scout experience, creating meaningful opportunities that positively impact girls, inspire fellow volunteers, and leave a lasting mark on the community.

Service & Membership Recognition



Volunteer Service Award:

Celebrates the combined years of active adult volunteer service in a Girl Scout or Girl Guide organization, recognizing milestones in five-year increments. Volunteer service of 15+ years is recognized at the Volunteer Recognition Awards Dinner.

Membership Tenure:

Honors an individual's total years of membership, combining both youth and adult participation in any Girl Scout or Girl Guide organization, with recognition given in five-year increments. Membership tenure of 20+ years is recognized by GSHNJ with a letter and membership tenure pin mailed to the member's home.

How to Nominate

1

Identify a Volunteer to Celebrate

Think of someone whose contributions have made a lasting impact on Girl Scouts, troops, or the community.

2

Review the Nomination Decision Tree

Use the [decision tree](#) to match your nominee's achievements to the most appropriate award.

3

Fill Out the Nomination Form

Provide clear examples of the nominee's impact, aligning their achievements with the selected award.

(Nomination form can be found [here](#).
Tips on how your submission can stand out are on page 8!)

4

Gather Endorsements

All endorsements must be submitted as part of the nomination package. Please include the appropriate number of endorsements to support the award nomination. Nominations are considered incomplete without the required endorsements.

5

Submit Your Nomination

Email completed nomination form with endorsements to volunteerrecognition@gshnj.org.

Tips for a Strong Nomination

Make your nomination shine with these helpful tips!

1. Be Specific and Detailed:

Highlight the nominee's contributions with clear examples that demonstrate how their service exceeded expectations. Focus on concrete achievements and measurable results.

2. Tell Their Story:

Share the nominee's Girl Scout journey, including their positions, length of service, and personal impact. Connect their efforts to the mission of building courage, confidence, and character.

3. Show Their Impact:

Explain how their work benefited others—whether it's Girl Scouts, troops, service units, or the broader community. Include meaningful details such as events organized, girls mentored, or funds raised.

4. Align the Award Criteria:

Ensure your nomination reflects the specific criteria for the award. Demonstrate how the nominee meets or surpasses these standards.

5. Enlist Support for Endorsements:

Enlist others who have worked closely with the nominee to write and submit endorsements. These additional perspectives can help strengthen your nomination.

After Submitting a Nomination:

1. Submission Confirmation:

After you submit your nomination via email, you'll receive a confirmation email. If additional information or clarification is required, we'll contact you directly.

2. Review Process:

- **Initial Screening:**

All nominations are reviewed upon receipt to ensure they are complete and align with the awards criteria. If forms are incomplete or endorsements are missing, the sponsor will be notified and given the opportunity to provide the required additional information. If that information is not submitted, the nomination may be disqualified.

- **Detailed Evaluation:**

A panel of GSHNJ staff, council leaders, and experienced volunteers carefully evaluates each nomination. The panel assesses nominees based on the impact of their contributions, alignment with the Girl Scouts' mission, and measurable outcomes.

- **Consensus Meeting:**

The panel convenes to discuss and finalize honoree selections, ensuring decisions are fair, unbiased, and reflective of each nominee's contributions.

3. Selection Notification:

Sponsors of selected honorees will be notified by March 13, 2026, with ample time to confirm attendance at the recognition event. If a nominee is not selected, their sponsor will be notified.

4. Recognition Ceremony:

Honorees will be celebrated at the Volunteer Recognition Awards Dinner on Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 6:00pm at the Bridgewater Manor in Bridgewater, NJ.

How do I know which award to choose?

Review the descriptions in this guide as well as the [decision tree](#) to match your nominee to the best award.

Can I nominate more than one person?

Yes, but a separate nomination form is required for each nominee.



Closing & Contact Info

Recognizing a volunteer's dedication strengthens our Girl Scout community.

Submit your nomination today and help us celebrate their achievements!

Contact Information:

Questions? Contact volunteerrecognition@gshnj.org and someone from the team will assist you.

