Volunteer National Awards

15 minutes

This module provides volunteers and parents with an overview of the Volunteer National Awards, and the next steps to complete a nomination.

Volunteers with Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan have the opportunity to work alongside many outstanding individuals. There are many ways to recognize the contributions of these wonderful individuals. This module provides an introduction to the Volunteer National Awards nomination process as a form of formally recognizing those contributions.

Objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the Volunteer National Awards
2. Identify potential nominees for Volunteer National Awards
3. Identify who can provide endorsement letters to support a Volunteer National Award nomination

Identify Potential Candidates:

Ask the audience to answer by show of hands:

• Who knows an exceptional volunteer?
• Who knows an exceptional volunteer who always goes above and beyond?
• Who knows an exceptional volunteer, who always goes above and beyond, who deserves to be recognized for their work?

Think about a volunteer who has inspired you. A volunteer who has always been there to help you with the answers to questions. A volunteer with an unending supply of new ideas. Or a volunteer who has never let you down.

Introduction to the VNAs:

Almost everyone knows at least one person who may be eligible to receive a Volunteer National Award. The VNAs are awarded annually to volunteers who have shown exceptional effort throughout the year. Anyone can nominate a volunteer to receive a VNA. Volunteers who are selected will be awarded in front of their peers at the annual award banquet each spring. Think about someone you feel deserves to be recognized. Does everyone have someone in mind?
When you have someone in mind, start by thinking about their most impactful service. Is it completed alongside girls? Or is it completed in support of other adults?

Who says ‘girls’?
The best award for volunteers completing service directly with girls is the Volunteer of Excellence.

Who says ‘adults’?
There are a few options here! Your next question is what was the geographic impact? Did they support volunteers in one area, in more than one area, or across the Council?

• One area: If the individual’s service was one area, the Appreciation Pin might be a good fit.
• Two areas: If the individual’s service was two or more areas, the Honor Pin might be a good fit
• The entire Council: This individual might be a candidate for the Thanks Badge.

Volunteers who have already received the Thanks Badge might be eligible to receive the Thanks Badge II – which is awarded to Volunteers who have made an impact across the entire Girl Scout movement.

Letters of Endorsement:

Every nomination requires two (Volunteer of Excellence, Appreciation Pin) or three (Honor Pin, Thanks Badge, Thanks Badge II) letters of endorsement. One of those letters can be from you, but the rest need to come from someone else. Who has some ideas about where letters of endorsement can come from?

Answers may include: co-volunteers, parents, girls, staff, operational volunteers, community members who have been impacted by the volunteer’s service in Girl Scouting.

If a white board/chalk board/ large pad is available, write down the answers the group generates. If one of the answers above does not come up during the conversation, add it at the end.

When you are writing a letter of endorsement, you want to keep it focused on measurable impact that the individual has made. Who can think of examples of measurable impacts?

Anything that can be measured or counted: for example number of girls helped, volunteers supported, improved recruitment numbers, funds raised, events facilitated etc.

Submitting the Nomination:

Once you’ve collected the letters of endorsement, you can submit the online form on the GSSEM website: www.gssem.org/volrecognition

Resources:

Volunteer National Awards Online Supplemental Learning Module
Recognitions & Awards page on the GSSEM website: www.gssem.org/volrecognition

Where to go for help:

Contact Volunteer Experience at volunteerexp@gssem.org or call 313-309-1132.

Questions? Feedback? Contact: Volunteer Experience 313-309-1132; volunteerexp@gssem.org