



Highest Awards Recognition Packet



Tips and templates for press releases and recognition ceremonies for volunteers, service units, and caregivers.

Adapted from Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast & Girl Scouts of Western Washington

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In Partnership With:



Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Press Kit for Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awardees

Congratulations on your Girl Scout accomplishment! Use the templates below and follow these five tips to help you prepare a press release to send to local media about your Girl Scout accolade. To think about as you draft your press release:

-  Use the templates provided by GSWO. These templates provide a useful framework for presenting your message in a way that is meaningful to journalists and newspaper editors. If your press release is succinct and well-written, some newspapers may choose to print it verbatim.
-  Your lead paragraph should be no longer than three lines in length. It should provide the who, what, when, where and why of your story. Imagine that readers can only see the very first paragraph in your press release – what is the most vital information for them to know?

Use colorful quotes from Girl Scouts or the troop leader. Quotes in a news release shouldn't repeat information that you've already stated; they should add support to your story. Be sure to include quotation marks and list the person's name, title, and organization. For example: "We're so proud of Sarah's hard work toward earning the Bronze Award," said Jane Doe, leader of Troop 1234. "The volunteers at the animal shelter are especially grateful!"
-  Write in a concise, active voice and try to limit your release to around 300 words. Journalists always use active voice ("Jenna earned the award") instead of passive voice ("The award was given to Jenna"). Newspapers tend to be tight on space, so keep your release short and sweet, and don't forget to proofread before you send!
-  Include a photo with your release. Choose an action shot, if possible, and provide a descriptive caption that explains what's happening and identifies all subjects in the photo.

Where to send your press release?

Your best bet is to email your release to your hometown or neighborhood newspaper, blog or online publication. Big daily newspapers and TV stations might not have enough space to print or air your notice, but you can always try.

Template: Girl Scout Bronze Award Press Release

(City) resident earns Girl Scout honor with (project)

CITY—Girl Scouts of Western Ohio (GSWO) has awarded (city) resident and Girl Scout (name) the Girl Scout Bronze Award – the highest award a Girl Scout Junior can earn. Girl Scouts who receive this award demonstrate achievements in leadership development, project planning and taking action to make a positive, sustainable impact in the community.

By earning the Girl Scout Bronze Award, (name) has become a community leader. Her accomplishments reflect leadership and citizenship skills that set her apart.

(Include two- to three-sentence quote from troop leader.)

(Name’s) project focused on (describe the project in no more than 150 words).

(Include two- to three-sentence quote from girl.)

We’re Girl Scouts

We serve more than 1.1 million girl members and 640,000 adult members who believe girls can change the world. It began over 100 years ago with one woman, Girl Scouts’ founder Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low, who believed in the power of every girl. She organized the first Girl Scout troop on March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Georgia, and every year since, we’ve made her vision a reality, helping girls discover their strengths, passions, and talents. Today we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We’re the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. And with programs for girls from coast to coast and across the globe, Girl Scouts offers every girl a chance to do something amazing. To volunteer, reconnect, donate, or join, visit gswow.org.



Template: Girl Scout Silver Award Press Release

(City) resident earns Girl Scout honor with (project)

CITY—Girl Scouts of Western Ohio (GSWO) has awarded (city) resident and Girl Scout (name) the Girl Scout Silver Award – the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn. The award represents a girl’s accomplishments in Girl Scouting and her community as she grows and works to improve her life and the lives of others.

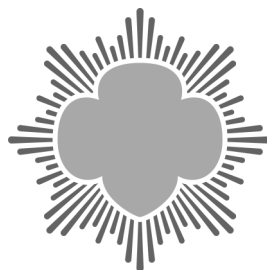
By earning the Girl Scout Silver Award, (name) has become a community leader. Her accomplishments reflect leadership and citizenship skills that set her apart.

(Include two- to three-sentence quote from troop leader.)

(Name’s) project focused on (describe the project in no more than 150 words).
(Include two- to three-sentence quote from girl.)

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Template: Girl Scout Gold Award Press Release

(City) resident earns Girl Scout honor with (project)

CITY—Girl Scouts of Western Ohio (GSWO) has awarded (city) resident and Girl Scout (name) the Girl Scout Gold Award – the highest award a Girl Scout can earn. The award represents outstanding accomplishments in leadership development and advocating for others:

By earning the Girl Scout Gold Award, (name) has become a community leader. Her accomplishments reflect leadership and citizenship skills that set her apart.

(Include two- to three-sentence quote from troop leader.)

(Name’s) project focused on (describe the project in no more than 150 words).

(Include two- to three-sentence quote from girl.)

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Highest Awards Recognition Ceremonies

You can recognize Girl Scouts who earn the Highest Awards for their grade level in many different ways—at a troop ceremony, with family and friends, during a service unit meeting, at a bridging ceremony with the entire service unit—or in any other special way you can imagine. Gold Award Girl Scouts in Girl Scouts of Western Ohio are recognized with a letter of congratulations, a Gold Award pin (purchased by Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and distributed at the ceremony) and a certificate from GSUSA. They will also be invited to one special council-wide Gold Award Ceremony each year and will receive additional recognition certificates and letters there. We encourage troop volunteers, service unit members and families to provide additional tokens of appreciation. Bronze and Silver Award Girl Scouts are recognized with a letter of congratulations to their troop/group and a certificate from GSWO. They will also be invited in spring to regional recognition ceremonies where they receive a commemorative patch. Girl Scouts includes learning by doing, cooperative learning and girl-led activities into all that we do. It's always great to include girls in the planning and hosting of any special event or ceremony. Maybe troop members, camp friends or other peers of the Girl Scouts being honored would like to help plan!

Basic Ceremony

- **Opening with Flag Ceremony-** Younger troop members or other Girl Scouts lead a flag ceremony. Contact your local Regional Girl Scout Office or Center for more information and to request flag materials.
- **Promise and Law-** You may incorporate the Girl Scout Promise and Law into the flag ceremony, or incorporate a candlelight Promise & Law ceremony at another time during your celebration.
- **Welcome Message/Keynote speaker-** Invite a project advisor, a mentor or another special individual to speak. The welcome message may be very simple or it may include a more detailed call to action or motivational message.
- **Invocation (optional)-** If appropriate, invite a spiritual or religious person to lead an invocation. Please keep in mind that Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization and be respectful of all participants.
- **Introduction of the awardee(s)-** You may want to offer a special seat to the Girl Scouts earning the awards and/or her guests. Include a personalized introduction of each award recipient into the ceremony script.
- **Introduction of Honored Guests (optional)-** If special guests are present, you may want to introduce them as well such as family members, Girl Scout staff or volunteers, local elected officials, etc.

Highest Awards Recognition Ceremonies *(continued)*

Basic Ceremony *(continued)*

- **Introduction or Definition of the Highest Award-** Explain the merits and process to all guests. You may want to ask an advisor, service unit volunteer, or previous award recipients, troop members or another volunteer to share this. You can utilize the basic award descriptions in the Media Release template for this as well.
- **Focus on the Recipient(s)-** Have a person who knows the Girl Scout(s) speak about her experience, her goals or other basic biographical information.
- **Recipient(s) Qualifications-** Invite the project advisor (or another appropriate person) to talk about the specific Take Action project(s) being recognized.
- **Presentation of the Award-** project advisor, parent/guardian, service unit manager, or Girl Scout staff member (etc.) presents the award pin to the award recipient. Your troop/service unit/group may choose to create and present an additional certificate at this time. (Recipients will have already received certificates from our organization).
- **Acknowledgements from Recipient(s) (optional)-** Invite Girl Scouts to speak about their award experience and Take Action project. They may also share encouragement or advice for younger Girl Scouts. (Please let recipients know ahead of time so they can prepare). They may also choose to present a family member/parent/project advisor with an appropriate thank you gift/recognition of their efforts.
- **Congratulations and Closing Comments-** Have a volunteer or troop member share additional congratulations and close the ceremony. During this time, you may want to present a “challenge” to all award recipients. (See the following page for more information about a challenge and search online for even more ideas!)
- **Closing Song (optional)-** Words can be printed in the written program.
- **Closing Flag Ceremony-** Younger troop members/other Girl Scout. Reception (optional)- Offer time for guests to visit, provide refreshments or host a reception pot-luck style.

Highest Awards Recognition Ceremonies *(continued)*

Sample Script Ideas

- **Welcome/Opening comments:** *Thank you for joining us here today. We're here to honor these exceptional girls for completing their Girl Scout Highest Award. This is the most prestigious award in all of Girl Scouts. These girls have shown they are committed to working toward the goals they set for themselves and improving the world around them. These young women have dedicated tremendous amounts of energy to discovering the needs in our communities, connecting with experts and volunteers and taking action to create true and meaningful change in our world. They are amazing leaders and we are glad you all can be here to celebrate their achievements.*
- **Introduction of the Highest Awards:** *Girl Scouts have been making their corner of the world a better place for over a century, beginning in 1916 with the first Girl Scout Highest Award the Golden Eaglet. Today our Girl Scouts earning their Highest Awards join this century long legacy of changemakers and community problem solvers and we celebrate with them. Highest Awards earners devote many hours to their projects and truly accomplish the Girl Scout mission of developing courage, confidence and character to make our world a better place. While earning this award, girls explore their communities, practice public speaking, improve communication skills, research and share their knowledge and often gain practical life skills such as learning to use a new piece of technology. Earning this award truly represents an incredible undertaking and a great learning experience.*
- **Challenge/Closing:**
 - *I challenge you, today's honorees, to accept this award in the spirit in which it is given to you. Know that with this award comes responsibility. As you enter this covenant of esteemed women, know that you are regarded with honor and respect.*
 - *I challenge you to seek beauty in all around you. Know that art, in all forms, both defines and bridges cultures.*
 - *I challenge you to honor the earth and its living things.*
 - *I challenge you to respect yourself and to continually strive to improve mind, body, and spirit.*
 - *I challenge you to remember the founder of Girl Scouting, Juliette Gordon Low and the beginning of Girl Scouting in the U.S.A. Know that Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world are part of your family.*
 - *I challenge you to give service. Give freely of yourself, expecting nothing in return. Celebrate the diversity of those around you. Seek to improve life for others.*
 - *I challenge you to strive for excellence in all you do. Recognize the accomplishments of yourself and those around you. Know how today's achievements affect the world around you.*
 - *By accepting this challenge you become a changed woman. You become part of an elite group who recognize that receiving this award is not one celebratory moment, but a lifetime commitment. If you accept this challenge, please repeat after me: I affirm my dedication to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. I understand my obligation to live with honor and to lead by example because the highest award of Girl Scouting has been entrusted to me. I will do my best to support other Girl Scouts on their road to a Highest Award. I will give back to Girl Scouting what it has given me. I will respect others and live worthy of respect, as one forever bound to the ideals of Girl Scouts. Thank you and congratulations, Highest Award Girl Scouts. We will now end with a closing song (include song title & words), followed by a closing flag ceremony. Then, we invite all participants to join us for refreshments. Thank you for being here and supporting these amazing young women along their Girl Scout journey.*

Highest Awards Recognition Ceremonies *(continued)*

Opening Flag Ceremony

In keeping with Girl Scout tradition, we will begin with a flag ceremony. Please stand as girls from Troop # _____ present the flag.

- **Please stand for the presentation of the flag**
 - *If you have an “audience”, such as at an Investiture/Rededication Ceremony (parents, invited guests, etc.), this is the signal that the ceremony is about to start.*
- **Girl Scouts Attention**
 - *This is the signal that the girls should be ready to start.*
- **Color Guard Attention**
 - *If the Color Guard has been standing “At Ease”, it comes to “Attention”. It is also a signal to be ready to start.*
- **Color Guard Advance**
 - *Indoors - The Color Guard carries the flag(s) toward the front of the room and stands in front of the flag stands. Outdoors - the Color Guard carries the flag to the flagpole.*
- **Color Guard, Post the Colors**
 - *Indoors - The Color Guard places the flags in the stands; the American Flag is last. Outdoors - the Flag Bearer attaches the flag to the rope and quickly hoists the flag; the American flag is raised first.*
- **Color Guard, Honor your Colors**
 - *The Color Guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “Attention.”*
- **Join me in the Pledge of Allegiance**
 - *The Pledge of Allegiance, songs, poems, and Girl Scout Promise are done now.*
- **Color Guard Dismissed**
 - *The Color Guard walks to the back of the room, or away from the flag pole.*

Highest Awards Recognition Ceremonies *(continued)*

Song Option

Girl Scouts, please stand and join in singing On My Honor.

(When all Girl Scouts are standing, please start them in singing)

Chorus:

*On my honor I will try,
There's a duty to be done and I say aye,
There's a reason here for a reason up above,
My honor is to try and my duty is to love.*

*People don't need to know my name,
If I've done any harm, then I'm to blame.
If I've helped anyone, then I've helped me,
If I've opened up my eyes to see.
I've tucked away a song or two,
When your feeling low, there's one for you,
If you need a friend, then I will come,
And there's so many more where I come from.*

(Chorus)

*Come with me where a fire burns bright,
We can even see better by candle's light,
We can find more meaning in a campfire's glow
Than we ever learned in a year or so.*

*We've made a promise to always keep,
And we pray night falls before we sleep.
We'll be Girl Scouts together and when we're gone,
We'll still be trying and a singing this song.*

(Chorus)

Highest Awards Recognition Ceremonies *(continued)*

Closing Flag Ceremony

Please stand as girls from Troop #_____conduct the closing flag ceremony.

- **Girl Scouts Attention**
 - *This is the signal that the Color Guard should be ready to start.*
- **Color Guard Attention**
 - *If the Color Guard has been standing “At Ease”, it comes to “Attention”. It is also a signal to be ready to start.*
- **Color Guard Advance**
 - *Indoors - the Color Guard walks toward the front of the room and stands in front of the flag stands. Outdoors - the Color Guard walks to the flagpole*
- **Would you all please join me in the singing of Taps (optional)**
 - *Singing Taps, poems, other songs, are done now, if desired.*
- **Color Guard, Honor your Colors**
 - *The Color Guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “Attention”*
- **Color Guard, Retire the Colors**
 - *Indoors - the Color Guard removes the flags from the stands, the American Flag first. Outdoors - the Flag Bearer lowers the flag slowly and with dignity. The Color Bearers fold the flag(s).*
- **Color Guard Dismissed**
 - *The Color Guard carries the flag to the back of the room, or carries the folded flag to an appropriate place.*

Closing

Thank you to everyone for attending tonight. It is wonderful to see so much support for our Girl Scouts and everything they have accomplished this year.