

Girl Guiding Awards & Recognition

**Internal Awards
External Community Awards**

A Handy Reference Guide for Guiders



Introduction

Awards recognize the value of and appreciation GGC has for individuals who contribute to Guiding. GGC has awards at provincial, and national levels that recognize service from a non-member to a Unit Guider or to a member of Council.

You can learn about options for GGC awards, instructions and tips for your submissions, and other ideas for recognizing members from a mini course in Member Zone. The course is about 10 minutes long, and reviews all available awards. You must be logged in to view. www.girlguides.ca/enrichment/AwardsAndRecognition/#/

The information in this guide is accurate as of the publication date, however, for the most up-to-date information, check Memberzone.

Why should we give awards?

Awards information governing adult members is found in Member Zone, under Opportunities Recognition Awards.

The presentation of awards to Guiders formally recognizes their contributions, and are given to honour the recipient. Regular presentations are encouraged to show how much our Guiders are appreciated. Never wait until a job is finished to offer recognition.

There are Provincial and National awards. District Councils and Units are encouraged to give awards at every level. Do not wait for Guiders to retire or move away, etc. One of the best Guider retention tools we have is giving the appropriate award at the appropriate time.

Awards show that we value not just the deed, but the person too. The granting of an award is an opportunity to recognize someone publicly and acknowledge their work in the presence of their peers.

Applications for provincial and national awards are to be completed online through GGC SmartApply (Survey Monkey). If you do not have an account, you'll need to set one up. <https://ggcportal.smapply.ca/>

Tip: *If you are in a position with a girlguides email account, set up your smart apply to your personal email so you do not lose your access after you leave a council position! When you nominate someone for an award through SurveyMonkey, complete the nomination form and include letters of support.*



Suggestions for all Awards

Ideally, awards are given by the Unit or Council that is most impacted by the work done by the Guider. For example, a District Council might want to give an award to a guider at the district level. District Council is then responsible to carry out the award process. If the Guider is working at the provincial or national level, those levels may also wish to acknowledge their efforts. The level that initiates the award must carry out the process.

Note that any Guider can make a nomination for an award. If you need help deciding which award someone should be nominated for, contact the provincial awards advisor by email ns-awards@girlguides.ca

- Nominators must write a letter of support. Be sure to follow the instructions for each award to make sure all information is included.
 - The nominated Guider will receive copies of the letters of nomination. It helps let the Guider know their efforts have been appreciated.
 - Letters should contain details about the Guider and current information, detailing their accomplishments since she last received an award. Letter writing tips and a sample letter are included further on in this guide. Letterhead is available on the member zone under awards recognition.
https://mbr.girlguides.ca/Documents/MZ/Oppurtunities/GGC_Letterhead.docx
- Awards may be applied for at any time during the year. However, there may be special events when awards will be presented (for example, provincial annual meetings and conferences, District Year End, etc).
- The Gold Thanks and Team awards may be awarded to the same member multiple times on different occasions; however, a different award should be considered if possible.



Recognition of Years in Guiding

Membership Year Pin

All girl and adult members of Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada receive a Membership pin. The Membership pin indicates the number of years of membership to the organization and only the current Membership pin is worn. Youth receive their Membership pin from their Guider or Commissioner and adults receive their pin from their District/Provincial Commissioner. Pins are provided at the beginning of the year.

50 + Years of Membership

Letters of recognition and pin are distributed through the National Council. If you are aware of a Guider receiving their 50+ pin, it is suggested to mark this accomplishment at a special Guiding event in person.

New Unit Guider Appreciation Pin

This is presented to a member once. No award application is required. This pin is awarded to all new Unit Guiders at the end of their first Guiding year to show GGC's appreciation. It is mailed at the end of the Guiding year.

Application/Approval of Awards Process

- A Guider applies through GGC SmartApply Portal. Include the planned presentation date if possible. This date is when the award gets added to IMIS records.
- A minimum of two reviewers will review the award nomination.
- Once a decision is made you will receive an email letting you know if an award is approved.
 - NOTE: If the nominee's profile is not up to date, and the award applied for that has steps (Bronze, Silver, Gold), the application may not be approved. You may need to dispute and provide evidence to proceed or accept the recommendation for a different award.
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Presentation of Awards

- When you receive notice of approval, connect with your district commissioner, and ns-awards@girlguides.ca to discuss the next steps for presentation. This is applicable for the following awards:
 - Commissioner's Award
 - Gold Thanks pin
 - Medal of Merit
 - Merit Awards (Bronze, Silver, & Gold)
 - Team Award
 - Provincial Award (Mayflower)
 - Unit Guider (Bronze, Silver, & Gold)



Presentation of Awards con't

For the following awards, a presentation package including a pin is mailed to the address on the nomination form. Questions regarding these awards and presentation can be sent to ns-awards@girlguides.ca

- Beaver Award
- Fortitude Award
- Gold Maple Leaf Award
- Honorary Life Award
- Valour Award

The nominator is responsible to ensure that the award pin is purchased through the Girl Guide Store. It is not necessary to show any documentation to purchase awards. If the award is through a unit nomination, the unit should purchase. If it is through a district, the district should purchase, and so on.

Writing nomination letters

Suggestions for completing the nomination form

Visit the National website to ensure you have the right link, and current information.

1. Collect the information needed to complete the application, including the iMIS profile (contact the provincial awards contact or your District Commissioner for a copy of the iMIS profile).
 - a. **Inclusivity check:** are you using the nominee's correct pronouns?
2. Check to see which awards the recipient has and when they were presented.
3. Determine which award best fits the nominee Awards are not presented in a set sequence, so take time to choose the appropriate one. Consider what other Guiding awards she has received. The Award Reviewers will review and may make a recommendation if necessary.
4. Select individuals to write supporting letters. Two letters are required for most awards. National awards require three letters.
5. Choose people who know the Guider in different capacities so that different aspects of their involvement will be noted. Letters from non-members may be added to the Guiding letters to provide an overall picture.
6. Suggest things that each letter writer might include.
7. Give letter writers a deadline to have the letters completed and sent to you.
8. Compile all information requested to support the application and forward it to the Council concerned for local approval. All other councils may be informed out of courtesy. Save copies of your nomination letters.



Suggestions for Writing a Letter of Support

1. Identify the person you are writing about.
 - a. Your introduction paragraph should indicate the person you are nominating, the award applied for, and a brief summary (1 to 2 sentences) of their roles and accomplishments.
 - b. State your relationship to that person and how long you have known them.
2. In the body of the letter:
 - a. Describe how the member supports the values of Girl Guides of Canada. You may want to highlight parts of the values or the Guiding Law which they exemplify.
 - b. Identify two or three reasons why you think they should be recognized.
 - c. Allow one paragraph for each reason and give specific details as they relate to Guiding and the work done. Include words that will be compatible with the key word in the description of the award. Ideally, focus things they've done since they last received a Guiding Award.
3. Summarize and close your letter.
4. Complete the letter and return it to the individual who requested it in a timely manner. Deadlines are important.

What do I Write in a Letter of Support?

What have they been doing since they received their previous award? Include as many dates as possible. (The exception would be the Honorary Life Membership when all service would be considered.) Be specific and give examples of how they meet the criteria.

Have they:

- enriched youth-driven program?
- undertaken any special projects or events?
- taken other Units to camp?
- given extra effort to their Council or committee activities?
- been a role model for other Guiders, especially those with whom they work most closely?
- offered special programming to units?
- mentored other members?
- collaborated with others?
- embodied the Guiding Spirit or kept the Sisterhood alive?

You can also include some personal information in your letters as well.

- What are their interests in and out of Guiding?
- Are they involved as a volunteer in other groups?
- Are they known for acts of kindness?
- Do they enrich the lives of others in their community? Give examples.
- Do they have a family that is important to them?



The iMIS Profile provides the details of service and positions held, the Awards Committee needs to know why you feel she deserves the award.

Use a business letter format (GGC letterhead is available on Member Zone). Your letter will be read by several people and is given to the recipient when they receive the award.

Below is a sample letter, to be used as a guide. Use your own words and experiences with the Guider you are supporting. Share the sample letter with other letter writers. Don't assume everyone knows what is expected.

Sample Support Letter

Jan 2026

Dear Members of the Awards Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of the Medal of Merit nomination for [GUIDER NAME]. I have had the privilege of knowing Suzy since 2016, and throughout that time, they have consistently demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the mission and values of Girl Guides of Canada. Their dedication, generosity, and leadership have made a lasting impact on countless youth and volunteers within the [NAME OF DISTRICT/UNIT/PROVINCE]. [GUIDER] last received the Gold Merit in 2000.

[GUIDER] has always been one of the first to step forward when support is needed. In 2022, when a vacancy arose last-minute for the "Sample Letter Trex Camp" unexpectedly had to step down, [GUIDER] rearranged their work and vacation without hesitation to ensure the camp could continue as planned. Thanks to their selflessness, campers were able to enjoy a meaningful and memorable experience.

The following year, [GUIDER] joined the Quartermaster team at a Provincial Camp. Despite a week of heavy rain, their positive energy and resilience uplifted everyone around them. Their warmth and humour turned a soggy camp into a joyful adventure that all campers and camp crew fondly remember.

In 2024, Suzy took on the role of Responsible Guider for a large event, which welcomed approximately 200. Their organizational skills were exceptional, creating a day full of engaging training activities, and a strong sense of community. Their ability to coordinate such a complex event with ease and precision speaks to their leadership and dedication.

This year, they served on the organizing committee for Guiding Sisterhood events, including the Sisterhood challenge and the district year end event, where they took responsibility for planning, organization, and execution. The event was a great success, and [GUIDER] embodies the Guiding Law (especially sharing the Sisterhood of Guiding and recognizing their talent & ability).

[GUIDER NAME] is a passionate advocate for Guiding in every aspect of their life. They frequently speak about the value of the organization with colleagues, friends, and community members, and has inspired many new volunteers to join. Their enthusiasm and positive outlook make them a natural ambassador for Girl Guides of Canada.

Beyond their involvement in Guiding, [GUIDER NAME] is involved in the local military wives' choir, and is supported by their family, including her partner, two daughters, and son. In their spare time, they enjoys crafting and contributing their creativity to Guiding projects and beyond. Suzy's contributions exemplify the spirit of Guiding — building confidence, fostering inclusivity, and empowering youth through shared experiences. They are truly deserving of the Medal of Merit.

Yours truly,
[LETTER WRITER]
(State your position in Guiding)



Letter of support FAQs

FAQ are available on the Member Zone. Please review those there.

https://mbr.girlguides.ca/MZ/Opportunities/Recognition/Member_Awards/MZ/Opportunities/Member_Awards.aspx?hkey=903459ea-c436-4d6e-97e8-c0951f285312&WebsiteKey=1675821e-cd57-4fb7-ab69-2f2c75a3b6ef

Helpful Tip

What is extra effort? Extra effort is that which goes beyond what the average guider would normally do. The Awards Committee is looking for accomplishments over and above the job description for their position. Keep in mind that we all give more than what is expected, and that Unit Guiders do have written job descriptions.

Award Descriptions

Silver Thanks pin

The Silver Thanks pin may be given by any member to any person, business, organization, etc., who isn't a member and who has contributed to Guiding in a way that deserves thanks. The pin is often given for one specific action, but it can also be given for overall good service. Examples could include a special guest to a unit, a caregiver who picks up or stores unit cookies, or a local business that donates money or supplies to a unit.



Criteria

- The recipient is not a member of GGC.
- The recipient has contributed to Guiding in a way that deserves thanks.

The Silver Thanks pin may be purchased from the [Girl Guide Store](#). Consider presenting it alongside a letter of thanks.

Gold Thanks pin

This pin may be given to a youth or adult member who has It is often given for one specific action, but can also be given for overall good service. Examples include completing a short-term role or a term on a committee, leading or contributing to a community initiative, or someone who went out of their way to mentor a new Guider. The Gold Thanks pin may be awarded more than once, but members are encouraged to consider presenting a different award instead.



Criteria

- The recipient is a member (girl or adult) of GGC.
- The recipient has contributed to Guiding in a way that deserves thanks.



Unit Guider Award

Unit Guider Awards may be presented to members for good service in the role of Unit Guider. Good service is defined as regularly attending meetings, contributing to a unit Guiding team through shared planning and leadership, and providing youth with a range of programming and opportunities.

Criteria

- The recipient is an adult member of GGC.
- The recipient is a Unit Guider with the required years of service in the role.
- Bronze Unit Guider Award: No minimum
- Silver Unit Guider Award: 4+ years
- Gold Unit Guider Award 11+ years
- The recipient contributes to a unit Guiding team and provides youth with diverse and empowering programming and opportunities.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.

Special notes

- The years of experience are cumulative.
- Adult participants are eligible to receive these awards.
- Members may receive any or all of these awards during their tenure.
- The Bronze Unit Guider Award can be awarded during a member's first year.

Commissioner/Administrative Community Leader Award:

The Commissioner's / Administrative Community Leader's Award may be presented to District Commissioners, and Administrative Community Leaders (ACLs) for good service and leadership in a Commissioner or ACL role. This award can be presented during a member's tenure or upon their retirement.

Criteria

- The recipient is an adult member of GGC.
- The recipient has demonstrated good service and leadership in their role as Commissioner/ACL, recruiting and welcoming new members and supporting current members.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.

Special note

- Members who have already received this award and who are completing a subsequent term in a Commissioner or ACL role should be considered for a Merit Award.



Merit Medals

Merit Awards may be presented to members for satisfactory completion of a role (e.g., Adviser, committee member, Community Guider) or for dedicated service to the role of Unit Guider (e.g., for offering girls unique or dynamic experiences), particularly where the Unit Guider Award(s) have already been awarded.

There are three Merit Awards: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. A member may earn any or all of these awards during their time in Guiding. Merit Awards are typically awarded in order. Youth members are eligible to receive the Bronze Merit Award, but they will receive the Silver or Gold Merit Award only in exceptional circumstances.

Bronze Merit Award criteria

- The recipient is a member (youth or adult) of GGC who has not previously received a Bronze Merit Award.
- The recipient has taken on a role (e.g., Adviser, committee member, Community Guider) and performed it well or has gone above and beyond the requirements of the Unit Guider role.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.



Silver Merit Award criteria

- Except in special circumstances, the recipient is an adult member of GGC who has previously received a Bronze Merit Award but has not previously received a Silver Merit Award.
- The recipient has taken on a role (e.g., Adviser, committee member, Community Guider) and performed it well or has gone above and beyond the requirements of the Unit Guider role.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.



Gold Merit Award criteria

- Except in special circumstances, the recipient is an adult member of GGC who has previously received a Silver Merit Award but has not previously received a Gold Merit Award.
- The recipient has taken on a role (e.g., Adviser, committee member, Community Guider) and performed it well or has gone above and beyond the requirements of the Unit Guider role.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.



Medal Of Merit

The Medal of Merit may be awarded in recognition of service to a significant role or project (e.g., as the lead for a provincial camp, as a member of Provincial Council) or in recognition of significant cumulative service and dedication.

Criteria

- Except in special circumstances, the recipient is an adult member of GGC who has previously received a Gold Merit Award but has not previously received a Medal of Merit.
- The recipient has made a significant contribution to the Guiding movement through a specific role or project or through cumulative service.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.



Team Award

The Team Award may be given to each member of a well-functioning team who together planned and completed an event or project or who worked together during a time of adversity. Examples could include a team that supported youth through an emotionally difficult event, who worked together to plan and execute a community event (e.g., a District Camp or recognition ceremony), or who formed a special committee or working group. If the team includes youth, they should be doing something above and beyond activities that would be part of their regular unit programming. Examples of non-eligible activities include a service project or camp planning for a unit camp.



Criteria

- The recipients are members (youth or adult) of GGC.
- The recipients are members of a well-functioning team.
- As a team, the recipients planned and completed an event or project or worked together during a time of adversity.

Fortitude Award

The Fortitude Award may be presented to members (youth or adult) who have shown great courage and endurance while facing adversity. Their fortitude must have been demonstrated within the past 12 months; however, the onset of adversity may have occurred further in the past. Examples could include a member who has battled an illness, a member who has supported youth through the loss of a peer, or a member who has suffered personal loss.



Fortitude Award continued

Criteria

- The recipient is a member (youth or adult) of GGC.
- The recipient has shown great courage and endurance while facing adversity within the last 12 months.

Special notes

- The recipient must be a current member, but they will not be evaluated based on their level of involvement with GGC, particularly if adversity has prevented their active involvement.
- This award may be given posthumously in special circumstances. Posthumous applications must be made no more than one year after death.

Valour Award

To be considered for the Valour Award, a member must display heroism by risking their life or personal safety to save or attempt to save the life of another person. The display of courage could be during a Guiding activity or outside of Guiding. Applications must be made as soon as possible and no more than 12 months after the incident.



Criteria

- The recipient is a member (youth or adult) of GGC.
- The recipient has displayed heroism by risking their life or personal safety to save or attempt to save the life of another person in the last 12 months (inside or outside of Guiding).

All criteria are recommendations. When making the case for an exception, please feel free to submit an additional letter or rationale. This could include the following:

- The recipient must be a current member, but they will not be evaluated based on their level of involvement with GGC, particularly if adversity has prevented their active involvement.
- This award may be given posthumously in special circumstances. Posthumous applications must be made no more than one year after death.

The Beaver Award

The Beaver Award is awarded to members who have demonstrated exceptional service and commitment to Guiding at the provincial or national level. Examples could include serving as a member of the Board of Directors, serving as a Provincial Commissioner, or contributing extensively in other ways at those levels.

Criteria

- Except in special circumstances, the recipient is an adult member who has previously received a Medal of Merit but has not previously received a Beaver Award.
- The recipient has demonstrated exceptional service and commitment to Guiding at the provincial or national level.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.



Gold Maple Leaf Award

The Gold Maple Leaf Award may be awarded to members who have demonstrated exceptional service to Guiding at the national level. The recipient must have made a meaningful contribution to the Guiding movement in Canada and must have contributed to advancing the strategic goals of GGC. Examples could include serving as a member of the Board of Directors, serving as a Provincial Commissioner, or contributing to a number of national working groups and roles.



Criteria

- The recipient is an adult member of GGC who has previously received a Beaver Award but has not previously received a Gold Maple Leaf Award.
- The recipient has demonstrated exceptional service to Guiding at the national level.
- The recipient has made a meaningful contribution to the Guiding movement in Canada.
- The recipient has developed or contributed to the development of the strategic goals of GGC.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.

Special note

- The Beaver Award is a prerequisite for the Gold Maple Leaf Award and will be waived only in very exceptional cases.

Honourary Life Award

The Honourary Life Award (HLA) is awarded only to adult members. It is given in recognition of the impact a member has had through sustained service to the organization, typically for 30 years or more, at the provincial or national level. The HLA may be awarded to a member upon completion of a significant role in Guiding (e.g., Provincial Commissioner) in which they have demonstrated organizational impact.



Criteria

- The recipient is an adult member of GGC.
- The recipient's time with GGC demonstrates impact through good, sustained service to GGC (typically 30+ years) at the provincial or national level or through the completion of a significant role.
- The recipient has contributed as a member of committees or project teams.
- The recipient has promoted Guiding in the broader community.
- The recipient upholds the values of GGC.

Special notes

- Three letters of support are required
- A \$500 fee must be paid after the award is approved, before the award is mailed out.
- There may be other reasons a member would be deserving of an Honourary Life Award. Please email awards@girlguides.ca for any questions about eligibility.



Nova Scotia Award: Full Circle

The receiving member must be a current member of GGC.

As a youth member, she must have completed the whole program (Sparks through the Ranger Program).

For those instances where Sparks was not available to the member at time of joining a minimum of one year of Embers, with continuous membership through the programs, is required to qualify for the award.

A leave of absence of five years is permitted for Ranger / Bridging Members (18 year olds) from completion of their Program until they register as an adult member.

Upon their return they must complete one year of volunteering as an adult in order to receive the award.

Adult members are responsible to update youth years via their Member zone access.

The Full Circle Award is to be awarded by the respective District level.

Awards may be ordered, with payment, from the Provincial Office.

Full Circle Awards will be recorded on member iMIS profiles.

Nova Scotia Award: The Mayflower

The Mayflower is a very special Provincial award, which may be presented to someone who is making an outstanding contribution to Guiding within the Province of Nova Scotia . This award is approved by the Nova Scotia Provincial Council.

Note: Confirm any questions you have regarding the Mayflower with the Nova Scotia Awards Liaison-ns-awards@girlguides.ca



- It is to be considered higher than the Medal of Merit, which serves as a prerequisite for the Mayflower Award. With approval of the Executive Committee, the Mayflower Award may be presented to a member who does not hold the Medal of Merit.
- The Guider's service may be to adults or to youth.
- Their service need not include a Provincial position or be known Province wide.
- Their service must be ongoing - not just for a one-time task; they must still be serving and intend to continue serving Guiding.
- Their service to whatever position she is holding must be above and beyond the requirements of the position.
- Approval of this award cannot be based solely on past service that has been previously recognized by presentation of another award. Additional service since the last award presented must be documented in the supporting letters.

Applications for this award must be accompanied by at least three letters of documentation and support and submitted to ns-awards@girlguides.ca and not the Portal. Each application must be considered carefully on its own merits by Provincial Council.



Awards for Supporters (Outside of Guiding)

Often a Unit, or District will have special people from the community, who give service to Guiding. This service may be ongoing or may be for a special event. Saying thank you for such support can be done in several ways:

- Certificates of Appreciation
- Thank you notes
- Girl Guide Cookies
- Silver Thanks Pin

Thanking our Volunteers

Everyone likes to be appreciated. A kind word, a smile and a thank you goes a long way in making a volunteer feel recognized. If a volunteer feels that their contribution to the organization is worthwhile, they are more likely to talk to their friends into coming along for the fun & friendship.

Some ideas for gifts of appreciation:

- Special crests (clocks that say “thanks for your time”)
- teacup or coffee mugs
- handwritten thank you cards, or personalized contribution certificates (example in the appendix)

Reference Links

Girl Guides of Canada, Member Zone: <https://mbr.girlguides.ca/MZ>

Girl Guides of Canada, Nova Scotia Council. Awards and Recognition: https://www.girlguides.ca/web/NS/Program/Awards___Recognition/NS/Programs/Awards_Recognition/Awards_Recognition.aspx?hkey=de0bebd5-deec-46bc-b249-4023e0d03795

Girl Guides of Canada Awards Portal, Survey Monkey: https://ggcportal.smapply.ca/prog/national_awards_portal/

Canada's Volunteer Awards program offers an opportunity to recognize volunteers and not-for profits for their contributions. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/volunteer-awards.html>

The Governor General oversees the Sovereign's Medals for Volunteers, at <https://www.gg.ca/en/honours/canadian-honours/sovereigns-medal-volunteers>

Provincial Volunteer Awards are also available, through <https://novascotia.ca/nonprofitsector/provincialvolunteerawards/>

Check your local municipalities for additional ways you might recognize a volunteer.

