



Tips and tricks for hosting your own Highest Awards celebration



Let's Celebrate

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the Highest Award in Girl Scouts

We encourage you to incorporate the centennial into your celebrations:

- Have girls try an [activity](#) to learn more about the Gold Award and earn the Centennial Patch
- Have centennial-inspired (“100 years” or “1916-2016”) decorations: balloons, photo props, centerpieces, etc. Incorporate historical Girl Scout gear or photographs.
- Make a “[Wish Tree](#)” where girls can post their wishes for the next 100 years.
- Check out the [online store](#) for 100th anniversary gear.
- Use #gsGoldAward on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. You can also share your stories on GSCO social media channels and blog.

You can recognize Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award recipients 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 recipients in Colorado are recognized at regional Highest Awards celebrations and receive a certificate and letter of congratulations signed by our CEO and Board Chair, a Gold Award pin, a certificate from GSUSA, and letters of recognition and/or certificates from other entities such as branches of the military and local elected officials. They will also be invited to one special council-wide Gold Award Day at the Capitol each year.

Bronze and Silver Award recipients across the state are also invited to participate in regional Highest Awards celebrations where they receive a small gift in thanks for their participation. We encourage troop volunteers, service unit members and families to provide additional tokens of appreciation.

In any case, remember that 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 Gold Award recipient would like to help plan!

100 Years of History The Gold Award has its roots in early Girl Scout history—beginning with the Golden Eaglet of Merit that was created in 1916. Since that time, it has changed names: Golden Eagle of Merit (1916), Golden Eaglet (1919), Curved Bar (1940), First Class (1963), and in 1980 it was renamed the Gold Award. Girl Scouts' highest award has always focused on leadership and service.

The Gold Award is the highest award that a Girl Scout Senior (grades 9-10) or a Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11-12) may earn. Gold Award recipients complete two Leadership Journeys before beginning their Gold Award Take Action project, or one Leadership Journey if she has earned her Silver Award. Then she must work individually to design and implement a project that addresses a specific community need. While earning the Gold Award, girls connect with experts, community members and other Girl Scouts to create lasting change in their communities. Gold Award recipients devote at least 80 hours to their projects and truly accomplish the Girl Scout mission of developing courage, confidence and character to make our world a better place.



Basic Ceremony

Opening with Flag Ceremony- Younger troop members or other Girl Scouts lead a flag ceremony. [Contact](#) your regional Girl Scout office 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 and Law ceremony at another time during your celebration.

Welcome Message/Keynote speaker- Invite a recent Gold Award recipient, a member of your regional Gold Award Committee, your Service Unit Manager, 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.

Introduction of Honored Guests (optional)- You may want to introduce any other special guests who are present, such as family members, Girl Scout staff or volunteers, local elected officials, etc.

Introduction or Definition of the Highest Awards – Explain the Highest Award merits and process to all guests. You may want to ask a Girl Scout staff member, previous Gold Award recipients, troop members or another volunteer to share this.

Introduction of the Bronze Award Recipient(s) - Invite Bronze Award recipients to the front at the troop -level. The girls' troop leader or a representative from the troop may want to say a few words about the girls' project and their accomplishment. (Please let troops know about this opportunity ahead of time so they can prepare).

Introduction of the Silver Award Recipient(s) - Invite Bronze Award recipients to the front at the project -level (there could be more than one Silver Award project within a troop). A representative from the group may want to say a few words about their project and the skills they learned. (Please let troops/girls know about this opportunity ahead of time so they can prepare).

Introduction of the Gold Award Recipient(s)- You may want to offer a special seat to the Gold Award recipients and/or their guests. Include a personalized introduction of each Gold Award recipient into the ceremony script.

Presentation of the Gold Award- Gold Award project advisor, parent/guardian, service unit manager, or Girl Scout staff member (etc.) presents the Gold Award pin to the award recipient. Your troop/service unit/group may chose to create and present a Gold Award certificate at this time. (Gold Award recipients will likely have already received certificates, letters, and their pin at the council sponsored Highest Awards celebration).

Acknowledgements from Recipient(s) (optional)- Invite Gold Award recipients to speak about their Gold Award experiences and Take Action projects. They may also share encouragement or advice for younger Girl Scouts. (Please let recipients know ahead of time so they can prepare). The Gold Award recipients may also chose to present a family member/parent/project advisor with the smaller Gold Award parent pin.

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 pot-luck reception.

Sample Script Ideas

Welcome/Opening comments:

Thank you for joining us here today. We're here to honor these exceptional young women for completing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award. These are the most prestigious awards in all of Girl Scouts. These ladies 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 Gold Award:

The Gold Award is the most prestigious award that a Girl Scout Senior (grades 9-10) or a Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11-12) may earn. The Gold Award has its roots in early Girl Scout history, beginning with the Golden Eagle of Merit that was created in 1916. 2016 is the 100th anniversary, so this year we celebrate a century of girls changing the world! Gold Award recipients complete two Leadership Journeys before beginning their Gold Award Take Action project. Then she must work individually to design and implement a project that solves a specific community need. While earning the Gold Award, girls connect with experts, community members and other Girl Scouts to create lasting change in her community. Gold Award recipients devote at least 80 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 possible careers, 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.

Sample Script Ideas (continued)

Challenge/Closing I:

I challenge you, today's Highest Award recipients, 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 Gold 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 Gold. 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, Bronze, Silver, Gold Award recipients. We will now end with a closing song (provide 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.

Challenge/Closing II:

I challenge you, today's Highest Award recipients, to accept this Award in the spirit in which it is given to you. Know that with this award comes with responsibility. As you enter this covenant of esteemed women, know that you are regarded with honor and respect. Live worthy of this by living by the Girl Scout Law.

- I challenge you to remain honest and fair in all your dealings in this world. Never sell out and never give less than your very best. Always remain true to yourself. Always guard your honor.
- I challenge you to be friendly and helpful to everyone you meet as you go through life. Celebrate the diversity of your fellow human beings. Give service freely, expecting nothing in return. Seek to improve life for others.
- I challenge you to be considerate and caring to all living things, human and animal. Always being mindful of those in need, and the feelings of others. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- I challenge you to be courageous and strong in all you do. Stand strong in the face of adversity and share your courage with those around you, especially those smaller and weaker than you.
- I challenge you to be responsible for what you say and do. Think before you speak and act. Be sure everything you say and do reflects well on you and your family.
- I challenge you to respect yourself, so you may respect others. Continually strive to improve your mind, body and spirit. Strive for excellence in all you do and recognize the accomplishments of others.

Sample Script Ideas (continued)

- I challenge you to respect authority. Follow the laws of your country and nature. Be mindful of your rights as well as your responsibilities as a citizen of this great nation. Remember that freedom is not free.
- I challenge you to use resources wisely. Never waste the resources of nature or those of yourself and the people around you. Use your talents to better the world, and to protect our planet. Seek out the beauty that is all around you.
- I challenge you to make this world a better place. Use all your abilities to leave this world in a better condition than you found it. By your words, actions and deeds you can make a difference.
- I challenge you to be a sister to every Girl Scout. Help younger girls to reach the top as you have. Support them on their road to the Gold. Do your best to give back to Girl Scouting, that which has been given to you, and a little more.

We invite you to accept this challenge along with your Gold Award. You become part of an elite group who recognize that receiving this Gold 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 Gold and to give back to Girl Scouting, what it has given me. I will respect others and live my life by the Girl Scout Law. I will remain worthy of respect as one forever bound to the ideals of Girl Scouting.

Thank you and congratulations, Gold Award recipients. We will now end with a closing song (provide 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.



If interested in hosting a Highest Awards celebration for your service unit please contact your [Volunteer Support Specialist](#) for a list of girls and troops who have earned their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award this past year.

Questions? Email highestawards@gscolorado.org