



Thank You!

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Creative Ways to Show Your Appreciation

Special thank you to Karen Owens who first compiled this information in 1995.

**06-1606
02/2013**

Thank You! Thank You!! Thank You!!!

It takes help and contributions from many, many people to create and present an exciting, smoothly run Girl Scout program. Let's face it – without generous sharing of time and talents, there would be no program.

No matter what job you hold within the organization, you are constantly in the position of needing to say “thank you” to someone. If you're like most of us, your budget doesn't allow you to do nearly as much for your helpers as you would like. And indeed, most of them would prefer that your limited funds be invested in the girls. The challenge is to make your “thank-you” as inexpensive, yet meaningful as possible. The answer is “be creative!”

The following ideas were collected from many sources. The suggestions are terrific, but if they don't quite fit some of your specific needs, we hope they provide that little extra spark for your imagination that leads you to the perfect expression of your gratitude.

An Important Tip – Plan Ahead

You know from the beginning of the program year or from the first planning meeting for an event that there are going to be people to thank. That's the time to start thinking about your “thank-yous.” Here are some things to do. We'll get around to what to do with them shortly.

- Listen and watch, then keep a file of funny or momentous things that happen during the year, at camp, at events, etc.
- Take pictures, especially of helpers working with girls.
- Stock up on sample/trial size products.
- Collect freebies.
- Shop sales.
- Take your thinking cap to the Dollar Store. Ask yourself “what could this signify?” as you look at the items.
- Haunt flea markets and second-hand stores. It may take several visits to gather enough of a specific item for all your helpers.
- Ask for donations anywhere and everywhere. There isn't a single type of business that doesn't have something useful. It helps to tell the owner/manager that the donation will be used as a special “thank you” for an adult who has done thus-and-so for Girl Scouts. (Adults come back and spend money!)
- Allow sufficient time to order customized gifts.

Gifts from the GSCM Stores

Not everyone is “crafty,” and even those who are don’t always have the time to whip something together. So when you’re long on gratitude, but short on ways and means, what better way to say “thank you” for serving Girl Scouts than with a Girl Scout gift? It doesn’t have to be an engraved plaque or a gold pen. The GSCM stores carry dozens of gadgets and gizmos that are inexpensive enough to stock up and have ready for emergencies.

Pencils, balloons, stickers, books, book marks, patches, pins, buttons, cups, mugs, water bottles, etc., all make gifts that keep on giving.

A note such as “you’ve made a measurable difference” written on the back of a ruler, or “thanks for holding things together” attached to a giant paper clip, adds a nice personal touch.

Inquire about discounts for event directors.

Keep in mind that a few years of holding on to items that are discounted turns them into collectibles.

It also feels good to know that a portion of what you spend rolls right back to support GSCM. So you can give two gifts for the price of one.

Tie-In Gifts

If your ceremony, day camp, or other event has a theme or a logo, there are lots of ways to incorporate it in your “thank - yous.”

Pictures taken at camp or at a weekend event (or even a day-long event, depending on the circumstances) can be enlarged and converted to iron-on transfers for tee-shirts. Pictures can also be put on items such as coffee mugs, calendars, etc. Check your local photo processing shops for information.

Silk-screen your logo on tee-shirts, bandannas, tote bags, aprons, pillow cases, etc. Create a certificate of appreciation with your event logo as part of the design. An event patch (glued on with a nice border around it) makes it even classier. Consider presenting framed certificates to businesses that have been especially generous. It’s sure to find a place of honor for all to see.

Find someone who will etch or sand-blast your logo on glass or stoneware mugs from the dollar store.

Make paperweights featuring your event patch. Craft stores carry blank glass ones, or you can decoupage the patches onto rocks.

Buttons cost a lot less than patches and can easily be personalized. The Volunteer Resource Center and some Service Units have button makers to loan out.

Refrigerator magnets are easy to make, and the possibilities are endless.

Functional, Fancy, or Both

There are countless gifts that you can make, put together, or have made. Here are a few to get you started.

Collect odd tea cups and saucers from thrift stores and yard sales, fill them with specialty teas, and attach a note like, "When things get tough, boil some water, put your feet up, contemplate, and give me a call..."

Fill the cups with candy instead of tea.

Give an I.O.U. for a reciprocal service. Offer to baby sit, to deliver a meal, or, if the consultant is also a leader, to teach a craft or skill to her/his group.

Some gifts can be used while the person is doing the job for which a "thank- you" will be given. Why not give personalized tote bags, clipboards, notebooks, or camper's aprons (with pockets for personal scissors, tape, tools, etc) at the beginning of the event?

Put a small scoop of potpourri between two layers of lace net. Clamp together in an embroidery hoop and decorate with gathered lace, ribbon, silk flowers, etc.

Song books, game books, and craft supplies are a welcome addition to any leader's bag of tricks.

Dream catchers are very popular. They're also fun and easy to make.

Use a Girl Scout cookie cutter to shape a soda dough cookie that can be painted, lacquered, and glued to a magnet.

Write a message on a mini cutting board with macaroni letters. Glue on a Girl Scout sticker or decorate to a theme.

The More Personal, the Better

You can spend fortunes on gifts that don't come close to being as precious to the recipients as the littlest something you've chosen or made with a lot of thought and care. A little part of you is a treasure money can't buy.

If you enjoy a particular art or craft, if you bake, sew, write poetry, whatever, make small personalized gifts for those special "thank -yous." You may be able to use the "tie-in" concept as described above.

"Personalized" doesn't necessarily mean that the gift has the volunteer's name on it. Try to find something that reflects the service rendered or that says something about the person's occupations, interests, hobbies, etc.

Make that special something out of clay. Then use a pin or magnet. Dress a small bear for the occasion.

Or, if you're not that artistic, use "Shrink Art." Everyone can trace!

Make a "golden cookie award" for your cookie manager with a Trefoil Girl Scout cookie preserved with bronze spray paint followed by several coats of lacquer or clear enamel. Mount the masterpiece on a pin back or a magnet.

Use the craft supplies from the station that a helper is supervising to make a "thank -you" gift.

Make "Oscars" for those who help you with a skit or play.

Use the stories from your file to create a certificate award that says something unique about the person.

Fill out a registration form as incorrectly as possible and make it into a tee-shirt for your registrar.

Spray paint a small toy phone gold for a telephone chair or for all the times a special someone has listened.

"Punny" Gifts

Lots of household items and even their brand names suggest notes that can be attached to make fun and easy remembrances. A little nylon net tied up with a pretty bow make them even more special. These ideas will give you a start. The notes can be customized to fit a variety of circumstances.

Zest soap – You add zest to our program!

Quik drink mix – Thanks for being so "quik" to help out!

Whoppers candy – Thanks for your whopper ideas!

Baby Ruth candy bar – You're a real slugger! Keep on batting for our girls!

Mounds candy bar – You make a mound of difference!

BarNone candy bar – Bar none, you're the best!

100 Grand candy bar – You're worth even more to us!

Life Savers candy – You're a real life saver!

Equal sweetener – When it comes to troop helpers, you have no equal!

Sugar (butter, salt, etc.) – There's no substitute for you!

Slice soft drink – You're an important slice of our pie. We wouldn't be whole without you!

Bubble bath (if something has gone wrong) – As long as we're in hot water, we might as well enjoy it!

Kool-Aid packet – You're a cool aide!

Mountain Dew soft drink – You "dew" so much for our troop!

Crush soft drink – In a crush, I can depend on you!

Peanuts (mixed nuts) – We're nuts about you! Thanks for bringing our girls out of their shells! – or – I'd have gone totally nuts without you!

Seasoning packet – You add spice to our program!

Candle – Thanks for spreading the light of Girl Scouting.

Spark plug – We couldn't have done it without your spark of enthusiasm!

Waterproof matches – You really lit a fire under our girls!

Bugles snacks – Hallelujah! We did it!

Cracker Jack popcorn – Boy, did I pick the right box! You're a real prize!

Pretzels – We'd be in knots without you!

Party mix – You add a new flavor to our mix!

Jelly – Thanks for getting me out of a jam!

Fattening snack (cookies, chocolate, etc.) – We've gained so much from you, now it's your turn!

Energizer battery – You keep on going, and going, and going...

Halls cough drops – You belong in the hall of fame!

Pocket mirror – This is a picture of a real Girl Scout!

Heart-shaped soap (candy, dish, basket, etc.) – Thanks for putting your heart into serving our girls! – or – Thanks from the bottom of our hearts!

Angel food cake (or an angel anything) – You're an absolute angel!

Cupcake – You take the cake!

Q-Tip swab – This is just the tip of our thanks!

Hanger – You're getting the hang of it! – or – Hang in there!

Light bulb – You’ve got bright ideas!

Key – You’re the key to a successful program!

Glue or tape – Thanks for sticking with us!

Mints – You’re worth a mint!

Ball – The girls had a ball at your workshop!

Joy dishwashing liquid – It’s been a joy working with you!

Soup (homemade or canned) – You were “souper!”

Stick a paint stirrer in the opening of a stuffed garden glove to serve as a handle. Gather and tie the cuff snugly. Decorate (the “tie-in” concept could work here, too). Using “Scribble” paints, write, “Give yourself a pat in the back.”

Appreciation Dinners

It doesn’t really matter whether your “thank -you” dinner or party is pot-luck or catered. The important part is spending time together just for fun. If your budget won’t allow you to foot the whole bill, do what you can toward food and supplies and have everyone bring something to fill in the menu, or pay a portion of each person’s meal at a restaurant.

You can also ask parents to donate covered dishes as a way to thank their daughter’s troop leader, day camp supervisor, etc.

Of course, this is an ideal time to give awards, “thank-yous” and years of service pins.

Turn the Tables Let Them Make Their Own “Thank -Yous”

This can be done as part of your appreciation dinner or end-of-year party. Provide the supplies and instructions for a special craft that they might not get to try otherwise.

If your gift is a tote bag, for instance, offer several ways to decorate it.

Be Unpredictable – Be Outrageous

An element of surprise adds tremendously to an expression of thanks.

Deliver a giant “thank you” card. The bigger the better.

Send flowers. (From your yard?)

Send a candy-gram. A single chocolate rose can say it all.

Don't limit yourself to "home deliveries." Let your helper's co-workers, clients, and customers know that they've done something wonderful.

With a little imagination, the person who makes the delivery can be the most memorable thing about the surprise. It's fun if it's someone the helper doesn't know. It gets better if there's a costume involved. It can be as simple as a tuxedo or an old cap and gown, or as wild as a gorilla, a clown, or a hula dancer. Ask who of your friends has what stashed away. Anything goes! All you need to make the occasion truly spectacular is a totally uninhibited "ham." Your delivery person should enter with a flourish, blowing a horn or calling for everyone's attention. The person can then read a proclamation or sing a song worded especially for the occasion.

Don't wait until the end of the year to give a "thank you." Any gathering will do—a troop meeting, and adult Girl Scout meeting, a PTA meeting, at church, anyplace where your helper is among peers, friends, and/or family. The idea is to give frequent, positive attention.

Make up signs that say "A Girl Scout Leader Lives Here," mount them on stakes, and put them in leader's yards early in the morning. Attach "thank you" balloons as an extra touch.

Say It With Flowers

Check the library for *The Language of Flowers* to help you express your feelings.

Use silk as well as fresh flowers and plants.

Potted plants are great not only because they last longer than cut flowers, but because they are "green and growing," just like girls and Girl Scouting.

Give cuttings from your favorite house plant. Again, it's a little part of you.

Bulbs signify potential that with proper care can produce joy and beauty year after year.

Plants and flowers can be "tie-in" gifts, too. Use cactus for a western theme, bug tissue flowers for Mexican, etc.

Don't forget herbs.

Make origami flowers. Great activity for the girls.

A bunch of daisies are always a special Girl Scout gift.

Send virtual flowers - similar to electronic cards, you can send electronic versions of flowers! Pick a picture of the flowers you would like to send and simply send by e-mail. There are several options available online, but a few examples include: [virtualflowers](#), [iflowers](#), and [123greetings](#).

Tell the World

When you acknowledge someone in a public way, it not only brings greater attention to that person, it also brings greater attention to Girl Scouting, and therefore subtly broadens our base of support. We know we do wonderful things, but to survive and thrive, we have to publicize.

Submit your “thank- you” to the helper’s church, community, school, professional, club, and any other newsletter you can think of.

Make a “thank- you” poster that includes pictures and specifics about the event, the troop, etc. Ask to display it in a library, church, community hall, post office, grocery store, school, McDonald’s or anyplace where lots of people that know the volunteer will see it. Laminate the poster for an outdoor display.

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper as a general appeal for people to donate their time and talents to Girl Scouts, then go on to cite the contributions of those you want to thank.

Place an ad in the personals thanking your helpers.

Use Someone Else’s Words

A poem or an inspirational message makes a touching gift. There are many that pertain to the aspects of volunteering, friendship, leadership, a special adult’s influence on a child, what is a girl?, etc., but a special favorite among Girl Scout adults is:

The Green Angel

I dreamed I went to Heaven
And saw among the dead
An angel all dressed up in Green,
A halo ‘round her head.
She looked a little funny
Midst all the glaring white.
The others asked her jealously,
“What gives you such a right?”

“I’m just a Girl Scout leader,
I lay no hold to fame.
But being such a person
Means more than just a name!

“My jobs on earth were many;
The thanks and praises, few.
The work I did in just one day
Ten people ought to do!

“I was a tin can cooker,

A hiker, and pathfinder,
I've also been an artist,
A sailor and bookbinder.

"I taught jumping Jills to dance,
And parrots how to sing.
I made saints out of hooligans
While their mamas had their flings!

"I walked the streets until my feet
Felt like a ton of bricks,
Selling Girl Scout Cookies 'til
The mere thought of them made me sick!

"But it was sure a lot of fun;
Life never was a bore!
You see this role's not new to me,
I've been an angel before."

A nice way to present a poem is to print it on parchment-type paper, roll it in a scroll, and tie it with a ribbon.

Let the Girls Say "Thank-You"

One of the most meaningful ways to say "thank-you" is to get the girls involved, after all, that's what this organization is all about and it's important to teach the girls the joys of giving a "thank-you".

- When they learn a craft, have them make some extras to have on hand.
- Make a jumbo card and let each girl write something personal to the recipient.
- Let each girl put a "thumb print critter" and her signature on a certificate of appreciation.
- Using fabric paint, put each girl's hand print on a tee-shirt for someone who gives them a helping hand. (Applying the paint to the palms of their hands with a damp sponge works very well.)
- Girls can decorate a tee-shirt at an event using fabric paint, fabric crayons, or "Scribbles."

Appreciation is More Than “Thank You”

It’s great to feel that what we do is necessary, important, and worthwhile. The more “bonded” we feel to a group and the more appreciated we perceive our contributions to be, the more we are willing and able to give. Everyone knows that a little encouragement goes a long way. But a “little encouragement” really needs to be more than the same few phrases repeated over and over again. We all need to have more than the traditional “good”, and “fine”, and this is especially true for children. Sincerity, creativity, and variety are powerful tools in building self-esteem and trust. Here are a few possibilities:

How did you do that?

Keep up the good work.

That’s clever.

You’ve got it now.

Nice going!

That’s coming along nicely.

I like the way you_____.

That’s an interesting way of looking at it.

It looks like you put a lot of work into this.

You’re incredible!

What neat work.

Good thinking!

Thanks for sharing.

That’s encouraging.

I’m glad you’re here.

It looks like you put a lot of work into this.

Excellent!

That’s a good point.

I’m glad you’re on the team.

Formal Adult Recognitions

When a volunteer’s work and dedication deserves more than a thank-you, you may want to consider an award. Awards are not “thank-yous”. They represent significant contributions to the Girl Scout organization and have criteria that must be met. There is a full range of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (GSUSA) and Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM) awards, and no shortage of people who deserve to receive them. All that remains is for someone to send in the nomination. Everything you need to know to be that “someone” is contained in the *Adult Recognitions Digest*, available from Volunteer Resources or online (request publication 06-100). If you are in doubt about what awards your nominee may have already, please contact your Membership and Community Development Specialist.

101 WAYS TO GIVE RECOGNITION TO VOLUNTEERS

Here are 101 possibilities for recognizing volunteers. The blank 102 is for the beginning of your own list. It is important to remember that recognition is not so much something you do as it is something you are. It is a sensitivity to others as people, not a way of getting something done.



1. Smile
2. Put up a volunteer suggestion box.
3. Treat them to a soda.
4. A citation at an appropriate meeting.
5. Ask them for a report.
6. Send a birthday card.
7. Arrange for a discount.
8. Serve coffee and donuts for the volunteers.
9. Present a framed photo of an event.
10. Plan annual ceremonial occasions.
11. Invite them to a special meeting.
12. Recognize personal needs and problems.
13. Accommodate personal needs and problems.
14. Be pleasant.
15. Use them as a resource in an emergency situation.
16. Provide a babysitter.
17. Post an Honor Roll.
18. Respect their wishes
19. Give them an informal tea.



20. Keep challenging them.
21. Send a Thanksgiving Day card to the volunteer's family.
22. Provide a nursery.
23. Say "Good Morning."
24. Greet volunteers by name.
25. Provide good training.
26. Help develop self-confidence.
27. Award plaques to sponsoring group.
28. Take time to explain items fully.
29. Be verbal.
30. Ask VIP's to converse with them.
31. Hold chat sessions.

32. Give them additional responsibility.
33. Invite them to participate in team planning.
34. Respect sensitivities.
35. Enable them to grow on the job.
36. Enable them to grow out of the job.
37. Send newsworthy information to the media about your volunteers.



38. Display photos in the community.
39. Present a corsage.
40. Say "Good Afternoon."
41. Create pleasant surroundings.
42. Honor their preference.
43. Invite them to coffee.
44. Enlist them to train other volunteers.
45. Have a public reception.
46. Take time to talk to them.
47. Babysit so they may go to dinner.
48. Make good plans.
49. Commend them to other people.
50. Send a valentine.
51. Make thorough pre-arrangements.
52. Illustrate how to equate volunteer experience with work experience.
53. Include on a special committee.
54. Recommend to prospective employer.
55. Provide scholarships to conferences or workshops.
56. Offer them advocacy roles.
57. Utilize them as consultants.
58. Write thank you notes.
59. Invite them to participate in goal formulation.
60. Surprise them with coffee and cake.

61. Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements.
62. Nominate them for awards.
63. Commend their work to their employer.
64. Carefully match volunteers to the job.
65. Praise them to their friends.
66. Provide substantive training.
67. Provide useful tools.
68. Say "Good Night."
69. Plan staff and volunteer social events.

Merci

70. Be a real person.
71. Give a Girl Scout gift item.
72. Accept their individuality.
73. Provide opportunities for conferences and evaluations.
74. Have the girls write a letter.
75. Maintain meaningful files.
76. Send impromptu fun cards.
77. Write a personal letter.
78. Utilize purchased newspaper space.
79. Give official Girl Scout recognitions.



80. Promote a "Volunteer of the Month" program.
81. Send a letter of appreciation to their family.



82. Plan a "Recognition Edition" of a newsletter.
83. Color code name tags to indicate particular achievements (hours, years).
84. Send commendatory letter to prominent public figures.
85. Say "We've missed you."
86. Give them a swap.
87. Promote staff smiles.
88. Facilitate personal maturation.
89. Distinguish between groups and individuals in the group.
90. Maintain safe working conditions.
91. Adequately orient the volunteer.
92. Award special citations for extraordinary achievements.
93. Be sure that they understand and are committed to the mission of Girl Scouting – to serve girls.
94. Send a holiday card.



95. Be familiar with the details of the assignments.
96. Conduct a community wide, cooperative recognition event.
97. Plan a theater party.
98. Do something just for fun and invite their family.
99. Have a picnic.
100. Say "Thank you."
101. Just smile
102. _____