

Award Philosophy

All volunteers should be recognized in multiple ways - at the time of service, in newsletters, at the end of the year, handwritten note, etc. Awards such as Golden Acorn and Outstanding Advocate should be reserved for those exceptional volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their service. Every year is different. There should not be a set number of people who will receive the award. The award is most meaningful when presented in a thoughtful way as to the true service delivered. Do not diminish the feeling of a recipient by also giving the same award to someone who did not do as much. It is hard to make the determination that someone will not receive an award when they clearly have done great things but by following the rubric it becomes clear when you tally the points where the top volunteers fall for that award year.

Each local unit (LU) needs to address the parameters for any awards in their standing rules. For example:

One or more Golden Acorn Awards shall be presented annually to outstanding volunteers. A committee appointed by the President shall select the recipient(s). The Board of Directors may choose to present other awards such as Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Advocate, or a lifetime PTSA membership, as recommended by the committee.

It is also a good idea to expand on your LU's philosophy on awards to be included in the award committee's notebook. Some things to address may include frequency of an award to an individual, ability to consider staff members, eligibility of board members, or anything else that may be important to your community.

Awards consist of: pin, certificate, and district-wide ceremony. Each local unit (LU) determines what other recognition may happen for their recipients. Some local units list winners in their newsletter and on reader boards. Some LU surprise the recipient(s) at a General Membership meeting or school event. Some LU give the recipient(s) a small token or gift such as flowers or candy or gift certificate as an extra, personal thank you.

Award Steps

1. Determine awards your unit will give and make sure it is reflected in your standing rules and budget
2. President appoints or makes sure that the award committee gets started
3. Communication begins to request for nominations
4. Committee analyzes and determines winner(s) by using the rubric
5. Committee orders awards
6. Committee notifies winners
7. Committee communicates winners to school community
8. Committee notifies PTSA Award Ceremony committee
9. Committee invites recipients to PTSA Award Ceremony typically scheduled at the end of March

Golden Acorn Details

Local Unit Guide to Golden Acorn Award Selection

The Issaquah PTSA Council has endorsed these guidelines for use by its member units. Adoption of any amendments to this document remain at the discretion of each local unit's Board of Directors and should align with applicable *Standing Rules*.

Description:

In 1937, The **Washington State PTA** established a unique, statewide volunteer recognition program to recognize and honor individuals for their work as advocates for the needs of children and youth. Each year, the Golden Acorn Award is awarded to thousands of volunteers through local PTA units and councils. Each winner receives the Golden Acorn Pin. In Addition, a \$65 contribution is made by the awarding PTA in the name of the Golden Acorn recipient, to the Washington State PTA Scholarship Foundation which awards approximately \$55,000 annually in scholarships to high school graduates for post-secondary education. Golden Acorn Awards can be awarded at any time during the year.

The Golden Acorn Award is above all, a PTA award whose winners volunteer in ways that meet the mission of PTA: promoting the health, welfare, safety and education of ALL children and youth in the home, school, community and place of worship. Selection of the Golden Acorn Award is an **objective process** that utilizes a *Scoring Rubric* aligned to the mission of PTA and contains criteria and considerations for scoring.

Procedure for Selecting Golden Acorn Committee

1. Local unit President(s) should review their unit's *Standing Rules* regarding formation of a Golden Acorn Committee.
2. The President(s) shall appoint additional Committee members to review nominees being considered for the award. A Committee of not fewer than 3 members and no more than 7 members is recommended.
3. Good candidates for the Committee are past winners and members with regular meeting attendance. To avoid an awkward situation, likely nominees should not be appointed to the Committee.
4. It is suggested that the President(s) not serve as a member(s) of the Golden Acorn Committee but are encouraged to submit nominations.
5. The President(s) will provide the Committee information necessary for the assessment of nominees. This may include: involvement in meetings, trainings and workshops in addition to other pertinent information such as room parent lists, site council rosters and committee member lists etc.
6. In order to distinguish the award as a PTA award and not a school award, it is **not recommended** that the school principal serve on the Golden Acorn Committee or announce the winners.
7. The Golden Acorn Committee should be appointed well in advance (October- December) of the Spring PTSA Award Ceremony/Reception to allow the Committee to observe volunteers, solicit nominations from members, research nominee service, select winners and notify the President and Council of winners.

Procedure for Selecting Golden Acorn Recipient(s)

1. The President (s) will advise committee members to maintain discretion regarding the winners and other nominees. To make sure that a worthy volunteer is not overlooked Committee members should also put forth names for the committee's consideration but they must not champion any particular nominee(s) during the process.
2. The President (s) should notify the Board of Directors, at its monthly board meeting details related to the Committee's formation.
3. Written *Nomination Forms* (see Attachment #1) should be provided to members in January or February. These forms will be prepared and provided to the members by the Committee. *Nomination Forms* may be distributed by kid-mail, e-mail, or a link to your website for download.
4. *Nomination Forms* should contain a return deadline that allows time for confirmation of information by nominators and the Committee. A space to list the nominator's name and phone number may be helpful should further information be required.
5. Completed *Nomination Forms* should include appropriate information and reasons for suggesting the nominee. Specific areas of service should be included that reflect the *Golden Acorn Scoring Rubric* categories that will be used to evaluate nominees. This may require follow-up for more details from the nominator or the nominee.
6. *Nomination Forms* may include names of recent winners to assist newer members with nominations and to avoid overlooking deserving volunteers assumed as previous winners.

Specific Recommendations to the Committee in Evaluating Nominations

1. REMEMBER—THIS IS A PTA AWARD! Nominations for outstanding community volunteers may be submitted that may not align with the specific mission of the PTA or the Golden Acorn Award. Because the PTA is proud of its volunteer service to children and youth, the first consideration should be to honor members of the PTA.
2. Volunteer service is defined as service to children and youth **over and above** what is recognized as part of a person's responsibilities or the duties of their position.
3. Faculty and staff nominees should have a volunteer record towards assisting the PTA and/or an outstanding volunteer record unrelated to their salaried responsibilities such as serving on special district committees. Consider the Outstanding Educator Award as an alternative.
4. A nominee considered for this award should be working for the good of all children in the whole school community. Their activities and contributions will cover multiple areas. For example, while classroom volunteering is important, volunteerism that touches more children is valued higher.
5. Consider the time commitment of volunteer service and the "desirability factor" of their position. Some positions may be "easy to fill" while others may draw from a very limited pool of expertise. Sometimes the most important child advocacy roles are not considered by most PTA members because they are perceived as too difficult or uninteresting.
6. At your Committee meeting, the Committee chairperson should share copies of all nominations to be reviewed for each Committee member. After the nominations are reviewed, the Committee should brainstorm other candidates not nominated. The Committee chairperson may choose to disguise nominee names with a number or other symbol to avoid subjectivity.
7. The Golden Acorn Award need not be a secret or surprise. Evaluating complete and accurate information on nominees is of utmost importance. Nominees can and should be contacted either by the nominator (by Committee request) or the Committee directly to clarify and complete volunteer information. Volunteers will be delighted to learn of their nomination and appreciate thoughtful and thorough work by the Committee in making selections.

8. Using the *Scoring Rubric & Scoring Work Sheet* (Attachment #2), each member should apply the listed criteria to each nomination on their *Scoring Worksheet* – more specifics are listed on the worksheet.
9. Unless the PTA budget or *Standing Rules* limits the number of awards, the number of award winners should be **flexible** and determined based on the point spread amongst nominees. It is strongly encouraged to keep the total to one or two but no more than three.

Scores tend to settle out in groups similar to a teacher's grading curve. If a specific number of awards are to be given, but a group of similar scoring nominees is bisected, the Committee may wish to discuss and re-score that group.

Example:

The PTA has always given 2 Golden Acorn Awards but the scoring of nominees is as follows:

Nominee #1 - 212 points

Nominee #2 - 186 points

Nominee #3 - 184 points

Nominee #4 - 175 points

This scenario would indicate either one winner or three winners. To give three awards, the Committee

chairperson would contact the PTA Treasurer to inquire about a funding increase.

Alternatively, the

Committee could re-score Nominees #2 and #3 for further differentiation and may wish to do additional research into their volunteer records before deciding on two winners.

10. **The Committee chairperson should retain and destroy all documents related to the scoring. Discussion amongst the committee members shall remain confidential.
11. Winners should be honored publicly for their service to children and youth. Presentation of the award(s) and Golden Acorn Pin is the time to inform members and the community why the PTA is acknowledging the winner(s) by sharing their history of volunteer service and to celebrate as a group their accomplishments.
12. The Committee should decide amongst themselves how and who will present the winners. Local unit winners and their families will also be invited to the PTSA Award Ceremony/Reception in March.
13. Each unit will have its own tradition regarding recognition that may include flowers, posters, engraved plaques etc.
14. The Council Golden Acorn Reception program varies annually. Instructions from the Council will be delivered through monthly Council meetings attended by unit presidents and electronically to Committee chairs.
15. Contact your PTA Treasurer for a check for \$65 per recipient to include with the State PTA form for submittal. The required form for submission is downloadable from the Washington State PTA website at www.wastatepta.org under programs. Allow 10-14 days for processing.

Considerations for the Award Committee

1. **Awards should be awarded at the time of service.** Awards should be given to the most deserving candidate(s) for the **current calendar year** (one full year back from the current date).
2. **Avoid** passing by high scoring nominees because they may be receiving or have received another award in the community or from other local units.
3. **Avoid** passing by a nominee because they will be keeping their current office and can receive the award next year instead.
4. **Avoid** “retirement awards” or evaluating volunteer service prior to the current calendar year.
5. **Avoid** consideration of friendships, personality traits or other subjective information.
6. **Avoid** giving the award to a volunteer that you feel sorry for.
7. The Committee will consider the fact that the Washington State PTA does not limit repeat winners within a local unit. Unless otherwise stated in the local unit’s *Standing Rules*, past winners are not precluded from consideration in subsequent years.
8. The Committee may want to come up with ideas on another way to acknowledge the perennial outstanding volunteer.
9. The Committee may want to consider a repeat nominee/winner for an alternate award such as Outstanding Advocate or Honorary Lifetime Membership.

Outstanding Advocate Details

Local Unit Guide to Outstanding Advocate Award Selection

*****The Issaquah PTSA Council has endorsed these guidelines for use by its member units. Adoption of any amendments to this document remain at the discretion of each local unit's Board of Directors and should align with applicable *Standing Rules*.*****

Description:

The Outstanding Advocate Award is offered by the Washington State PTA to recognize and honor individuals for continued and dedicated service to ALL children and a demonstrated commitment to helping create strong policies relating to the health, welfare, safety, and education of children and youth.

Advocacy should be viewed as active support in the causes for all children and youth. Advocacy includes, but is not limited to, those who are active in legislative issues on a state or national level. Individuals who work with the district or with their school administrators on student issues are also advocates. Volunteers who speak up for the students who can't are advocates. Volunteers who try to change things for the benefit of children at a local unit, district, state or national level are advocates.

An outstanding advocate should be a PTA grassroots advocate, teacher, assistant, administrator or community member. Each winner receives an Outstanding Advocate pin. In addition, a \$65 contribution is made by the awarding PTA, in the name of the recipient, to the Washington State PTA financial grant program.

Procedure for Selecting Outstanding Advocate Committee

1. The local unit's Standing Rules should determine whether this award is issued at to volunteers in their unit.
2. The president(s) may appoint a specific committee or this award may be reviewed with the Golden Acorn committee review.
3. See the "Local Unit Guide to Golden Acorn Award Selection" for further details.

Procedure for soliciting nominations

1. Use your website, electronic messages, kid mail, bulletin boards, etc.
2. The Outstanding Advocate Nomination Form should be a separate nomination form from Golden Acorn Award. (*See Attachment #3*).

Recommendations in evaluating nominations

1. It is okay to solicit for nominations and not give the award if there are no nominations or possible recipients.
2. Use the *Scoring Rubric and Scoring Work Sheet* (Attachment #4)

Attachments

Attachment #1 - Sample Form

_(Your unit name)_____ Golden Acorn Nomination Form

Since _(year award began at this local unit)_____, the _(name of PTA)_____ has honored outstanding volunteer service for children by awarding the Golden Acorn Award annually. The Golden Acorn Award is above all, a PTA award whose winners volunteer in ways that meet the mission of PTA: promoting the health, welfare, safety and education of ALL children and youth in the home, school, community and place of worship.

Award winners receive the Golden Acorn Award Pin and a special certificate from the Washington State PTA. The Council also contributes \$65 in the winner's name to the Washington State PTA Scholarship Foundation, which provides scholarships to selected high school students entering post-secondary education.

Please help us select volunteers from our community to receive a Golden Acorn Award this year.

Through recommendations, the Golden Acorn Committee will make the final selections.

Please feel free to contact _(name of committee chair)_____ at _(contact number)_____ with any questions you may have. The nomination deadline is: _____.

GOLDEN ACORN NOMINATION

I recommend that _____
be awarded the annual Golden Acorn Award given by the _(personalize with your unit name)_____. She/He has demonstrated an outstanding personal commitment to improving the lives of children and youth in the following ways:

Please be as specific as possible. Evaluations and selections are based on the criteria below. Additional pages may be submitted.

A. PTSA service:

B. School volunteer (non-PTA):

C. Service district-wide to the schools community:

D. Other community service (non-school/non-PTA):

Please complete in the event we need
to contact you for additional
information.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Attachment #2

Golden Acorn Scoring Rubric & Scoring Work Sheet

A. PTA/PTSA Service	Rate 0 to 5	Weight is 4
B. School Volunteer (Non-PTA)	Rate 0 to 4	Weight is 2
C. Service to School Community (District-wide)	Rate 0 to 4	Weight is 3
D. Community Service	Rate 0 to 4	Weight is 1

	Nominee #1	Nominee #2	Nominee #3	Nominee #4	Nominee #5
A. PTA/PTSA Service Score 0-5 Multiply x 4					
B. School Volunteer (Non PTA) Score 0-4 Multiply x 3					
C. District-wide Service to School Community Score 0-4 Multiply x 2					
D. Non-School Community Service Score 0-4 Multiply x 1					
Total Score					

Process for Scoring:

1. Each committee member should fill out the Scoring Sheet separately.
2. The committee should agree on a similar method of scoring whether that is by volunteer jobs, by individual questions or an overall rating after reviewing all questions.
3. The committee can either tally the total scores and take the average to see how the nominees rank or,
4. The committee can have each member rank the nominees and then compare the ranking to see how it falls out.

Questions to Answer When Determining the Category Ratings on a Scale

A. PTA/PTSA Service (0-5)

- Is the nominee a current member of the PTA?
- Does the nominee serve on the PTA as a voting board member, ad hoc chairperson, or other committee chair? Note: PTA liaisons should be scored under category C.
- What level of responsibility is related to their position and how much time, energy and responsibility is involved?
- How much PTA training or other support education did the nominee participate in? (PTA & the Law, Region 2 Fall Leadership Training, Legislative Assembly, Region 2 Legislative Round Table, Region 2 Spring Conference, Washington State PTA Convention, National PTA Convention, etc.)
- Is the nominee a leader or more of a “worker bee?”
- Does the nominee volunteer often on a variety of PTA business/activities?
- Does the nominee volunteer to chair an event or committee when no other leader can be secured?
- Does the nominee attend all or most meetings/events and carry out their responsibilities in an organized and timely manner?
- Does the nominee participate in the evaluation process of PTA business/activities and suggest improvements?

B. Non-PTA School Volunteer Service (0-4)

- What volunteer service outside of the PTA has the nominee undertaken in the school setting? (Examples include service on site council, booster club, tutoring, library, orchestra/band/choir support, room parent, classroom volunteer/field trip chaperone/party planner, grade level events such as graduations or 5th grade camp, Kindergarten Round-Up, Math Olympiad coach, Honor Society advisor, etc.)
- How many children and youth are affected by the service?
- What is the extent of leadership, time, responsibility and energy required of this service?

C. District-wide Service to the School Community (0-4)

- Has the nominee served on schools related committees or organizations that serve the needs of students across the district, not associated directly with the PTA? (Any Issaquah School District citizen’s committee such as the 5-Year Goals, High School Graduation Requirements, Text Book Review, Feasibility, Special Education, I-728 Plan, Gifted Education, Transportation etc.)
- Has the nominee been involved with a related organization such as Issaquah Schools Foundation, Volunteers For Issaquah Schools or Friends of Youth that also serves students district-wide?
- What role has the nominee had in any or all of these organizations/committees?
- Were they an officer, leader, sub-committee chairperson, PTA liaison or “helper” volunteer?
- What is the extent of leadership, time, responsibility and energy required of this service?
- How many children & youth were affected through the work of this organization/committee(s)?

D. Other Community Service (0-4)

- What sort of community service related to children has the nominee participated in? (Examples include: coaching sports, scout leader, church activity, hospital volunteer, fundraising guilds for medical research, preschool cooperatives/boards, homeowner’s association officer or neighborhood events coordinator/volunteer, music program volunteer, etc.)
- What is the extent of leadership, time, responsibility and energy required of this service?
- How many children and youth benefited from the volunteer service?

Attachment #3 - Sample Form

_(Your unit name)_____ Outstanding Advocate Nomination Form

Since _(year award began at this local unit)_____, the _(name of PTA)_____ has honored outstanding volunteer advocacy for children by awarding the Outstanding Advocate Award annually. The Outstanding Advocate Award is above all, a PTA award whose winners volunteer in ways that meet the mission of PTA: promoting the health, welfare, safety and education of ALL children and youth in the home, school, community and place of worship.

Award winners receive the Outstanding Advocate Award Pin and a special certificate from the Washington State PTA. Our local unit also contributes \$65 in the winner's name to the Washington State PTA financial grant program, which provides scholarships to selected high school students entering post-secondary education.

Please help us select volunteers from our community to receive an Outstanding Advocate Award this year. Through recommendations, the Award Committee will make the final selections.

Please feel free to contact _(name of committee chair)_____ at _(contact number)_____ with any questions you may have. The nomination deadline is: _____.

OUTSTANDING ADVOCATE NOMINATION

I recommend that _____
be awarded the annual Outstanding Advocate Award given by the _(personalize with your unit name)_____.
She/He has demonstrated an outstanding personal commitment to improving the lives of children and youth in the following ways:

Please be as specific as possible. Evaluations and selections are based on the criteria below. Additional pages may be submitted.

A. PTSA advocacy:

B. School advocacy (non-PTA):

C. Advocacy district-wide to the schools community:

D. Other community advocacy (non-school/non-PTA):

Please complete in the event we need to contact
you for additional information.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Attachment #4

Outstanding Advocate Scoring Rubric & Scoring Work Sheet

A. PTA/PTSA Advocacy	Rate 0 to 5	Weight is 4
B. School Advocacy (Non-PTA)	Rate 0 to 4	Weight is 2
C. Advocacy to School Community (District-wide)	Rate 0 to 4	Weight is 3
D. Community Advocacy	Rate 0 to 4	Weight is 1

	Nominee #1	Nominee #2	Nominee #3	Nominee #4	Nominee #5
A. PTA/PTSA Advocacy Score 0-5 Multiply x 4					
B. School Advocacy (Non PTA) Score 0-4 Multiply x 3					
C. District-wide Advocacy to School Community Score 0-4 Multiply x 2					
D. Non-School Community Advocacy Score 0-4 Multiply x 1					
Total Score					

Process for Scoring:

1. Each committee member should fill out the Scoring Sheet separately.
2. The committee should agree on a similar method of scoring whether that is by volunteer jobs, by individual questions or an overall rating after reviewing all questions.
3. The committee can either tally the total scores and take the average to see how the nominees rank or,
4. The committee can have each member rank the nominees and then compare the ranking to see how it falls out.

Questions to Answer When Determining the Category Ratings on a Scale

A. PTA/PTSA Advocacy (0-5)

- Is the nominee a current member of the PTA?
- Does the nominee serve on the PTA as a voting board member, ad hoc chairperson, or other committee chair? Note: PTA liaisons should be scored under category C.
- Did the nominee make statement to the school board, contact legislators, etc?
- Did the nominee seek to educate other members on advocacy issues?
- What level of responsibility is related to their position and how much time, energy and responsibility is involved?
- How much PTA training or other support education did the nominee participate in? (PTA & the Law, Region 2 Fall Leadership Training, Legislative Assembly, Region 2 Legislative Round Table, Region 2 Spring Conference, Washington State PTA Convention, National PTA Convention etc.)
- Is the nominee a leader or more of a “worker bee?”
- Does the nominee volunteer often on a variety of PTA business/activities?
- Does the nominee attend all or most meetings/events and carry out their responsibilities in an organized and timely manner?
- Does the nominee participate in the evaluation process of PTA business/activities and suggest improvements?

B. School Advocacy (0-4)

- What advocacy work has the nominee undertaken to make changes at school?
- Has the nominee talked with the principal or staff on issues of concern?
- Does the nominee sit on the school’s Site Council or other committees reviewing student needs?
- How many children and youth are affected by the service?
- What is the extent of leadership, time, responsibility and energy required of this service?

C. District-wide Advocacy to the School Community (0-4)

- Has the nominee served on schools related committees or organizations that serve the needs of students across the district, not associated directly with the PTA? (Any Issaquah School District citizen’s committee such as the 5-Year Goals, High School Graduation Requirements, Text Book review, Feasibility, Special Education, I-728 Plan, Gifted Education, Transportation, etc.)
- Has the nominee worked with other related organizations such as Issaquah Schools Foundation, Volunteers For Issaquah Schools or Friends of Youth?
- What role has the nominee had in any or all of these organizations/committees?
- Were they an officer, leader, sub-committee chairperson, PTA liaison or “helper” volunteer?
- What is the extent of leadership, time, responsibility and energy required of this service?
- How many children & youth were affected through the work of this organization/committee(s)?

D. Other Community Advocacy (0-4)

- What sort of community advocacy related to children has the nominee participated in? (Examples include sports organizations, scout leader, church activity, fundraising guilds for medical research, preschool cooperatives/boards, homeowner’s association officer or neighborhood events coordinator/volunteer, work on city or county committees, etc.)
- What is the extent of leadership, time, responsibility and energy required of this service?
- How many children and youth benefited from the volunteer advocacy?